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The journey to positive peace grassroots peace building in Kosovo

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The Journey to Positive Peace

Grassroots Peace Building in Kosovo

Madeleine Mosse

PHD Thesis

2012

The Journey to Positive Peace

Grassroots Peace Building in Kosovo

Madeleine Mosse

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Coventry University**

Abstract

This thesis examines grassroots peace building in Kosovo during the period 2001 - 2008 and seeks to understand how international actors have best supported, or otherwise, a process of deepening peace at this level. The research centres on analysis of thirty-three in-depth interviews with the main actors from this field.

Through analysing interpretations of peace and peace building in Kosovo, I identify a contradiction between on the one hand, the dominant approach of building peace through relationships (favoured by international actors); and on the other, the need for peace to address personal needs. This means helping individuals come to terms with the past, and affecting a broader normalization of people's everyday lives. I assert that a 'deepening' of peace in Kosovo will ultimately come about through offering young people more opportunities to 'open up their hearts and minds' - to broaden their horizons in ways that they feel empowered to view themselves and the world around them through a critical lens.

This research identifies negative attitudes and behaviours amongst external actors in Kosovo, and illustrates how our personal qualities and conduct are of primary importance when it comes to peace building. In doing so, I identify a need for a higher level of self-awareness, commitment and empathy amongst external actors. Whilst reports have emerged which seek to evaluate the *impact* of peace building in Kosovo, this research examines the *experiences* of those engaged in such endeavours and encompasses a strong story-telling element. It also seeks to ground the issues at stake within a broader understanding of Kosovo's social and historical landscape.

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Terms, Abbreviations and Acronyms

CDA	Collaborative for Development Research (North American Research NGO)
CSCE	Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (also known as the U.S. Helsinki Commission)
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission
FARK	Forcat e Armatosura të Republikës së Kosovës (The Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICTY	The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting
KFOR	Kosovo Force (NATO)
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security & Cooperation in Europe
PISG	Provisional Institutions of Self-Government
SANU	Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
SRS	Special Representative Secretary General
UÇK	Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës (Albanian for KLA)
UDBa	(Uprava Državne Bezbednosti) Serbian Security Services
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UPSUP	Unioni i Pavarur i Studentëve të Universitetit të Prishtinës (University of Pristina Students' Union)

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’ (Thich Nhat Hanh 1987: 107).

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(Slavenka Drakulić 1993: 4).

Map I. Kosovo Atlas Map

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Majority and Minority Ethnic groups in Kosovo

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Chapter One: Introduction & Methodology

Introduction

It is the summer of 2001 and I'm standing in the schoolyard of a village of just a few houses in a remote corner of Kosovo. The sun is blazing down, and a few children and myself are resting in the shade, after an afternoon spent playing games together. The children are part of a project I'm volunteering on with an international organisation established in Kosovo after the war to bring relief to children and to build peace. "I hate them," one child is telling me. "I hate them too," pipes another. "They are evil, and they have bad blood," another child says. Somehow the conversation has got on to talking about the war, and those who constitute 'the enemy'. "I don't think anybody is really born evil," I try to reason, "I mean, tiny babies, are they evil?" Yes, the children tell me, they most definitely can be.

I didn't know then what I know now. In fact I didn't know much at all. I was one of those thousands – tens of thousands¹ - of people who arrived in Kosovo after the war to 'help'. We wanted to build peace and we came in many forms, shapes, and sizes. Many of us had never heard of Kosovo before the war. A few of us came as volunteers with small organisations, many of us with bigger international NGOs, or agencies such as the UN. We were consultants and specialists and experts. We came in droves: for a week, six months, for two years. Some of us have come back again and again, many of us moved swiftly on to another crisis area like Iraq or Afghanistan.

Today I am in Kosovo again. I am conducting research for this thesis, and the topic of my research concerns the question that has bothered me since I sat with those children that afternoon. I want to know how we can build peace. Not at the political level, through treaties, clauses and international law, but in the hearts of those who have been most affected by violence; those whose lives the war tore through with all its bloody horror - like a tornado - taking homes, possessions, livelihoods, and family members with it.

On this trip I am interviewing a peace activist; a person who has worked tirelessly for social change since before war broke out in 1998 and whose record of achievements is inspiring and impressive. "I hate them," she tells me. "They didn't listen, they cared only about their careers; their motivation wasn't peace – they cared more about their own needs: money, power, and their egos..." "I'm so sorry to say this," She repeats this over and over again,

¹ An estimated one thousand international organisations entered Kosovo (a territory half the size of Wales in the UK) following the war. See Pula (2005: 7).

dragging hard on cigarettes. 'I'm so sorry...But this is what happened here and I need to talk about it.'² She really is sorry. Sorry that her anger has overwhelmed her and sorry to be speaking in this way. This time we are not discussing those on the 'other side' of the conflict, as the children were back in 2001, but members of the 'International Community'.

I leave Kosovo after this research trip exhausted. I've carried out over thirty in depth interviews with people working for change at the grassroots level - those for whom the transformation of Kosovo and that of their own lives means everything. The message is clear: international interventions like that experienced in Kosovo to 'build peace' don't really work, or at least not in the ways we think they do or should. Our efforts are far from all 'bad' or wasted, but they are fraught with challenges and we often lack wisdom in our approach.

This thesis seeks to shed light on how best those of us from outside who become involved in a setting such as Kosovo, might help communities move beyond the pain of the past towards a brighter and more peaceful future. Many studies have been made on peace building around the world and a small body of literature has emerged from Kosovo, which seeks to evaluate the interventions that took place following the war. However, some of the most precious insights gleaned by those involved at the grassroots in Kosovo had not made their way onto their pages. It is my wish therefore that through this research I can represent their voices in order that we may learn from them.

My initial intention

When I initially set out on this research project in 2008 I hoped to achieve what I believe many of us involved in peace research strive towards. I wanted to make a map; an instrument that could help to guide those of us involved in peace building through a process of moving from conflict to peace – in Kosovo and in other settings. This map – or 'peace building manual' as I saw it – would be primarily aimed at workers in grassroots organisations striving to bring about peaceful change around the world. It was essentially to be a set of 'lessons learned' from the Kosovo context. I wished to set it between the years 2001 (when the emergency phase ended, and the development phase can be said to have begun - and also the year I first visited the region) and 2008, when this research commenced (also the year that Kosovo Albanians made their [second] declaration of independence). I recognised this as the period where efforts to build peace took precedence over efforts to deal with the crisis resulting from the war.

² Interview, 2009, Respondent 3

The desire to carry out this research emerged from my experience of being involved in, and privy to, many grassroots peace endeavours in Kosovo between 2001 and 2006, when I worked in Kosovo as a volunteer. The activities I was involved in ranged from a peace festival, to a tolerance programme in schools, along with sporting and other volunteer-led community activities. All of these ventures had at their heart the desire to make positive changes: in communities and in the hearts and minds of those affected by the conflict. Following these stints in Kosovo I studied in the field of Peace Studies and became acquainted with the language and theories that populate this field. I felt that now was the time that I could bridge the gap between what I had learnt in the academic field and my experience of working in Kosovo, in order to create something ‘useful’.

My interest lies with the grassroots because that is the level at which I was most involved in Kosovo, but also because I still hang onto the belief that, however naive it may sound to some, people at the grassroots or community level have the power to change the course of their lives and that of the territory in which they live. I never cease to be inspired by stories of ‘ordinary’ people taking their fate into their own hands and making great changes in their lives and those of their communities. I will examine the notion of grassroots peace building in relation to peace building at other levels in greater detail later in this thesis.

A change in direction

However, though I set out to write a ‘grassroots peace building manual’, my field research sent me in a different direction.

I found myself asking one of my interviewees during my first field trip in 2008 (a member of local government who oversaw peace initiatives for young people following the war) why it was that nobody in Kosovo wanted to talk about ‘peace’ or the concept of ‘building peace’. This had been my experience. I had discussed my research with many different actors during this initial visit and mention of the words peace and peace building had evoked different emotions – cynicism, discontent, weariness, confusion – but rarely had the response been positive. “Because,” he explained, “We have contaminated holy words...Peace, like many other concepts in Kosovo has become contaminated, because it has been *politicized*.”³

³ Interview, 2008, Respondent 15

What my interviewee meant by this was that the concepts of peace and peace building in Kosovo have become bound up with political agendas. These words no longer necessarily resonated with the people I was talking to in the same way as they might with those of us involved in peace movements and peace research in Britain, for example: as the absence of violence, people living in harmony together, the right of access to fair and transparent institutions, freedom; etc. When peace has been spoken about in recent years in Kosovo it has often come from the mouths of those representing large international organisations - those to greater or lesser extents removed from the daily life of its citizens - such as members of the United Nations, the Security Council, or NATO, for example, along with employees amongst the myriad of international NGOs active in the region. Essentially these are individuals with agendas and mandates to fulfil. Terms like peace and peace building, along with others such as 'reconciliation', 'forgiveness' and 'multi-ethnicity', have become bargaining tools in Kosovo. If there is peace in Kosovo, its citizens have been told, then they can have what they want - whatever that might be for each community: sovereignty, negotiations, EU membership, etc. And whilst for these big players the word peace is synonymous with others like security or stability and is used interchangeably – such definitions of peace don't sit well with those for whom Kosovo is home.

Early in my research it became apparent that I needed to dedicate part of this thesis to looking afresh at the whole concept of 'building peace' at the grassroots in Kosovo, and to question the assumption that peace is in fact something that can be built. Additionally, the more I spoke to people, the clearer it became that the burning issues revolved less around those 'small questions' I had initially hoped to ask - the sorts of questions I needed answered in order to write a 'peace building manual' - questions like: 'How effective have the arts been as a tool to bring people together?' or 'What is the role that sport can play in building bridges between communities?' Much more pressing to interviewees were issues that formed part of a bigger debate, as they engaged me in discussions around topics such as: 'who are you/I/we to talk about peace?' And 'Do we really possess the tools and capabilities to make big changes happen in a place like Kosovo, particularly within the mechanisms of internationally-led or sponsored organisations?'

As time passed, I acquiesced to the demands of my interviewees. No longer did I try to fit their complex observations into the pages of a how-to manual. Though an admirable goal, I came to feel that writing any kind of peace building manual in the context of Kosovo was impractical. Above all I realised that by pursuing such an approach I would in a sense be

colluding with a way of seeing the world - and how to bring about change within it - that many of my interviewees wished the critique. Namely, that peace can be *achieved* by following a number of steps from A to Z, instigated by actors from outside. This research has therefore evolved in part into a critique of peace building from the perspective of the grassroots in Kosovo.

Method

Research Aim, Motivation, Questions and Themes

Research aim

To provide insight into the way that international interventions can support peace building at the grassroots: in order to reflect on the Kosovo experience, whilst providing insight for future interventions in this and potentially other contexts.

Research questions and themes

This research is structured around three research questions:

1. What key factors do those engaged in grassroots peace building in Kosovo identify as fundamental to bringing about lasting change at this level?
2. How do the direct experiences of those engaged in grassroots peace building in Kosovo either *conform to* or *challenge* the approaches that international actors have favoured?
3. According to the experiences of those engaged in grassroots peace building, in what ways have outsiders most helped and most hindered peace efforts?

Two significant themes are also particularly dominant in this thesis:

Firstly: the understanding that societal transformation depends to a significant degree upon the personal transformation of individuals. Whether that be the emotional transformation of individuals who lost family in the war and who now seek ways to transcend their grief; or transformation in the minds of those who refuse (or are unable) to look critically at the past or to take responsibility for what happened in Kosovo, for example. Likewise, transformation must take place amongst those of us who claim we want to ‘help’, but who get frequently side tracked by our own vested interests and greed. Challenges lie in how this need for personal transformation can translate itself into a ‘practical peace building

approach', and how this link between individual transformation and societal transformation can be convincingly conveyed within the academic realm of peace building, where the focus is so often (increasingly so, it seems) on *what we do*, rather than *who we are*.

The second theme that runs through this thesis is the acknowledgement that though a vast amount of resources were poured into Kosovo - a proportion of which made its way to the grassroots - much of it was wasted due to: *a gap between the ideals and values of international organisations and funders (who have a disproportionate level of control over most local efforts in some way) and the will of the population*. Essentially, this gap could be addressed, but it takes a degree of commitment and time that on the whole was not dedicated to the Kosovo context. For example, creating positive links between youth in a mixed village in order to forward the goal of multi-ethnicity is not within the realms of a six month internationally sponsored project. Therefore, those of us from outside must either adapt our expectations, or deepen our commitment to contexts such as Kosovo if we really want to support a process of positive change on the ground.

Position of researcher to research

The fact that the roots of this research lie in my personal experience of being a volunteer in Kosovo is significant. The experience of living in Kosovo, getting to know the people for whom it is home, working in and observing the field of peace building, and the wider sphere of international aid and development had a profound impact on me. During this time I formed many impressions, gained knowledge about the context, and forged crucial contacts, which greatly impacted this research.

There are numerous positive aspects to having an investment in, and experience of, the context one wishes to research. For example, I set out with a sound understanding of who the key players were in the grassroots peace building scene. I knew Kosovo's territory, having lived previously in three different regions: Western, Central and South-Eastern Kosovo, and having worked with an organisation that enjoys a network of contacts that is Kosovo-wide. I knew something about the complexities of the Kosovo context (the prejudices, politics, alliances, sensitive subjects, culture, customs, etc.) based on the trial and error of getting to know a region over several years. I had worked in majority, minority and mixed communities, and been exposed to many prejudices and diverse interpretations of the past. And I was greatly assisted in the process of carrying out this research by local

individuals who I had known previously; who trusted that I had a genuine passion for this subject and therefore helped me all they could. Through this many doors were opened.

Conversely however, challenges exist related to having prior experience such as this. Firstly, when you know a context well, you also know that a research project such as this can never do justice to the subject it wishes to investigate. Keith Douglas in his poem 'Simplify Me' uses the analogy of a 'wrong way telescope of time', to describe how a person appears simplified when we examine him through this backwards lens. Douglas writes, 'Time's wrong-way telescope will show, a minute man ten years hence, and by distance simplified' (Douglas 1997: 479). Likewise, as researchers examining contexts from outside, we often convince ourselves that we too are in possession of such a telescope; that our position as outsiders affords us a superior view. Thus through distance, complex issues appear simplified. In the case of Kosovo, I have never rid myself of feeling that the more I seek to understand, the more I read and talk to people, the less I really know. As an outsider one could spend a lifetime trying to understand Kosovo's complexities.

Secondly, in carrying out this research, I felt a weight of expectation upon me to come up with something worthwhile, that would adequately represent the experiences of those I came to know better through this study who generously shared their experiences. The tradition of peace studies is even founded upon the notion that peace research must be *useful* (Patomaki 2001: 726); however I question whether in fact, as Smyth & Darby suggest, researchers don't have unrealistic expectations about the influence that research such as this can have (2001: 35). Finally, I felt a desire not to offend through what I wrote, and to portray people's experiences sensitively, whilst maintaining objectivity. Thus, at times I saw the value of coming to a context completely cold, and longed to do so. In balance, however, I recognize that my prior experience in Kosovo has enriched this research⁴.

The researcher's close relationship with the context they research raises questions about objectivity. For example, in feeling warmth towards the people of Kosovo, I acknowledge that my strongest prejudices probably lie not with one community over another, as might be assumed, but against those from outside who at times misinterpret, or prove unhelpful, to

⁴ Ruth Behar's reflects on her own experience of carrying out fieldwork as an anthropologist, and of the struggles she encounters in attempting to relay her findings from the field, which she describes as the 'stopping places along the way': '*...the desire to enter into the world around you and having no idea how to do it, the fear of observing too coldly or too distractedly or too raggedly, the rage of cowardice, the insight that is always arriving late, as defiant hindsight, a sense of the utter uselessness of writing anything and yet the burning desire to write something, are the stopping places along the way...*' (Behar 1996: p 3)

their plight. Pam Bell suggests that most researchers in conflict settings acknowledge that they are subjective and that subjectivity affects their work, and questions whether such research can ever be considered 'neutral' (2001: 190). Likewise, Letherby argues that 'all research is ideological because no one can separate themselves from the world' (2003: 5). This is not least because, in the case of societies affected by violence, carrying out research can be a highly emotional task where one is exposed to situations and encounters not faced by researchers in other disciplines (Herman 2001: 77). Post-modern and hermeneutic approaches (from within the social science disciplines) acknowledge that the researcher and the subject are inextricably bound and that 'writing is always partial, local, and situational...our selves are always present no matter how hard we try to suppress them' (Richardson & St. Pierre 2005: 962). Likewise, the feminist perspective in particular reflects the fact that, 'we need to acknowledge ourselves in research and writing in order to make it clear that the production of knowledge is a dialectic loaded in favour of the researcher' (Letherby 2003: 9). Thus the decisions we make as researchers: the lines of enquiry we choose to pursue; what we include in the final research; and what we omit, all stem from our subjective selves. We permanently impose ourselves upon the research.

At the same time, through reflexivity and awareness, the researcher's forceful presence can be undermined to an extent. For example, through mostly unstructured and semi-structured interviewing, the respondents in this research answered my questions in ways I hadn't anticipated, often questioning me along the way. "What do you mean by peace?" they asked. Did I really believe in neutrality? How would I feel if such peace building endeavours were implemented in my own community? Such questions - which made this research project highly reflexive - blurred the lines between subject and researcher and ultimately made it stronger. This reflects the need for subjects of research to play an active role in its formation, which is recognized as an enriching approach to peace research (Reychler 2006: 10 - 11). Likewise this reflects my awareness that those interviewed should be given the opportunity to reach beyond their role as passive subjects, which sits at the heart of feminist theory on research methods (Oakley 1992, see also Letherby 2003: 66).

This tension concerning the role of an outsider in conducting peace research - if outsiders in such setting ever truly exist (Herman 2001: 78) - relates also to Foucault's discussions on power and the subject (Foucault 1982). For example, the external actor researching a context, exerts a peculiar sort of power over the internal subjects through a process in which

the subject becomes an ‘object’ - and thus demarcated from ourselves. Foucault suggests that through such a process the observer

‘Categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects’ (Foucault 1982: 781).

I remember, for example, an Albanian from Kosovo telling me how he was once invited to present a paper at a conference in Italy on the theme of identity and conflict in the Balkans. After the international delegates had made their presentations analysing Albanian, Serbian and other identities, this individual decided to begin his presentation by asking the Italian participants how they would feel if he dedicated his presentation to scrutinizing *Italian* identity; particularly as a visitor to a country he hardly knew. The Italian hosts were made to feel very uncomfortable⁵. I think it is true that as researchers in Peace Studies researching contexts from outside we often risk perpetuating - or at least mirroring - some of the injustices we seek to address. For example, we critique unjust power relations in Kosovo, whilst potentially becoming a part of a system that perpetuates them through, for example, the harsh delineations we make between ‘us’ and ‘them’ in our research. We criticize crude definitions of ethnicity made by leaders we label as ‘nationalist’, yet we emphasize these delineations by carrying out what could be defined as ‘ethnic peace building’ or ‘ethnic peace building research’ i.e. research which places a heavy emphasis on the ethnic dimension of conflict.

In conducting this research, I did not always carry the burden of being an outsider lightly; seeking at time (consciously or otherwise) to circumvent the ‘objectification’ described above. Linked to this is my awareness that how research and researchers are perceived can depend to an extent upon the individual’s own personal background. This is illustrated, for example, through my observation in Kosovo that when outsiders speak about reconciliation it is often interpreted locally as negative, however when a respected local actor discusses reconciliation it has the potential to be better received. Thus as researchers coming to a context from outside, with no direct experience of conflict and war, we must be aware of our limitations. One of my interviewees - herself an outsider to Kosovo, but who has lived through a war within her own country – when asked about peace research she particularly admired, explained:

⁵ Recounted by respondent 13

“I respect those who walk the talk; those few people in the field who have experienced what they are talking about. But I generally don’t have much respect for these other people who come from these wealthy, stuffy, backgrounds - because they’ve never been up against the barricade themselves.”⁶

This links to Assefa’s observations in the context of Sri Lanka, where as a visiting peace activist from Palestine, he was welcomed by his host with the following words, ‘Thank you for offering to help. One who has suffered knows what it means to suffer.’ Assefa explains that since he was from a place that had undergone intractable civil war, his host felt that he could know what it was to live with conflict and could therefore more readily understand the complexity of his people’s situation (2002: 286). As researchers in a conflict that is not our own, we must be aware of the limitations of our insight, and approach the context with humility.

There are number of ways in which the potentially uncomfortable relationship between subject and external researcher can be creatively bridged in research (both in terms of making the researcher feel more comfortable, and in attempting to bring greater meaning to research). For example, one PhD researcher I know, herself a veteran aid worker in Africa, tackled the deep discomfort she felt about carrying out field research in Sierra Leone (which she perceived as an imbalanced relationship through which she extracted information from subjects whilst leaving them nothing in return) by training a team of local researchers to assist in her data collection. That way she felt that she was at least able to offer something small back to the context in return. A different approach is that of Ruth Behar, who explains that her development of the medium of ‘poetic anthropology’⁷, is in part an attempt to tackle this issue. She explains:

What does it mean to be a poetic anthropologist? I can tell you what it has meant for me. It has meant allowing myself to experience the emotionally wrenching ways in which we attain knowledge of others and ourselves (...) If I had to say what is the thread that ties together these disparate ethnographic pursuits, it’s the search, the unceasing search, for connection across borders of nationality, ethnicity, class, religion and ideology (2008: 63).

Some writers in peace studies adopt the habit of referring to the subjects of research as their ‘friends and colleagues in the field’ as a means to make the delineation between ‘them and

⁶ Interview, 2008, Respondent 8

⁷ Poetic anthropology is the act of bringing a personal and poetic voice into anthropology. See e.g. Behar (1996) *The Vulnerable Observer*.

us' less stark⁸. Likewise, through a feminist approach to research, many researchers position themselves *within* the writing. As Letherby explains,

'The researcher, by locating oneself within social structures, seeks to understand those structures and extrapolate from this to try to understand and respect others' experiences, feelings and social locations' (2003: 1).

My own attempts to address the dilemma of how as a researcher I have interacted with the context researched reflects in many ways the approaches of Behar and of feminist theory. No matter how hard I tried, I did not feel comfortable creating a piece of 'hygienic research' (Kelly et al. 1992: 46; Oakley 1992: 58), which clearly segregates the researcher from the context. Letherby suggests that placing oneself in the research can also serve as an antidote to feeling superior in research relationships and writing (Letherby, 2003: 9), whilst Behar believes that, 'When you write vulnerably, others respond vulnerably' (Behar, 1996: 16). By positioning myself within this research I therefore seek to acknowledge my own vulnerability as an outsider who knows not all but who seeks to understand. I have attempted to demystify the notion of the researcher 'as scientist', which does not reflect my own experience of carrying out research. Finally I have drawn upon my own insights, making myself arguably a respondent within my own research, reflecting Katz-Rothman's observation that a fundamental shift is taking place in the methodological thinking in the field of social sciences and that an 'ethic of involvement has replaced an ethic of objectivity' (1996: 50).

Research approach

Interpretive

The approach of this research is interpretative, in that it seeks to look afresh at the issues at stake and uncover new perspectives on taken for granted concepts in the field - crucially by exploring the *experiences* of individuals (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000: 16). As the project evolved, the research naturally lent itself to this approach for a number of reasons.

Firstly, I wished to move away from the traditional approach of much peace research, which seeks to evaluate the *impact* of peace building endeavours. This type of research has at its heart the goal of assessing whether or not certain programmes have been effective or have successfully met goals and objectives. A lot of this kind of research is aimed at making

⁸ See e.g. Francis (2010), along with contributions within Eds. Lederach & Jenner (2002)

peace building interventions more ‘efficient’ and in assessing whether programmes have inadvertently caused harm or have had unintended side-effects (Caritas 2002: 159). Many studies seeking to measure the impact of peace building already exist (including a small number in Kosovo) and many excellent insights may be drawn from them. However, I recognised that an interpretive approach presented new opportunities for gaining knowledge in this context. For example, it is not true that if a peace building initiative has failed we have nothing to learn from it, an observation made in the context of development (Mosse 1998: 3), but less so from the perspective of peace building⁹. A particular NGO project in Kosovo’s schools, for example, may have had a negligible or even negative impact on bridging gaps between the communities it sought to unite, however the facilitators and participants involved are likely to have much to share about what was learnt through the experience of being involved in this endeavour. Thus we can learn as much or more from such experiences as from studies that base their findings solely on results. This reflects Reychler’s analysis that there are three necessary approaches to peace research: classical empirical-analytical research (searching for the causal explanations), interpretative research (investigating how people perceive their experiences) and participatory peace action research (Reychler 2006: 10).

Secondly, by taking an interpretative approach I saw the opportunity to further encourage reflection and honesty. For example, by the second or third interview, an individual might admit that she in fact harboured grave doubts about the impact her organisation was truly able to have on bringing about peace in the region. Building trust through in-depth and largely unstructured interviewing, uncovers new insights that may be missed through more normative and quantitative approaches to peace research. It is worth noting also that impact assessments in a sense ‘judge’ people and their organisations, which can influence what respondents are willing to share. Likewise, more interpretative approaches present greater space to explore *why* people feel a certain way - being mindful of prejudices or other influences upon them. Such an approach reflects also feminist principles where mutual trusts and relationships between researcher and the researched are perceived as crucial (Oakley 1992). This issue is no more pressing than in Kosovo, where communities often find themselves caught between what might be described as the ‘international script’ (what internationals expect them to say), and the transcripts of their communities (being true to their community and personal experiences), a theme I return to later.

⁹ The exception to this is demonstrated in the work of the CDA Listening Project. See CDA (2007) ‘The Listening Project Description’.

Finally, I wished to capitalize on my personal involvement, and to include my own reflections from over the years. Without my passion and knowledge of the subject, built on a personal involvement in the region, I do not believe that many of the respondents of this study would have revealed the level of information that they did. Some of the respondents who participated in this research genuinely hoped that through what we shared, together, we might influence the peace building field in some useful way - however tiny. Personal knowledge of the context also allowed me to reflect back on what people were telling me and to question why they responded as they did as I attempted 'to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.' (Denzin & Lincoln 2005: 3).

Qualitative

In line with the interpretative nature of this research, I have favoured a qualitative approach and this thesis revolves around field research in the form of thirty-three interviews (unstructured and semi-structured) and the interpretation of secondary sources such as academic books and papers, reports from NGOs, and surveys on local development issues, for example. Additionally my field research was enriched through many visits and trips I undertook around Kosovo - to see families I had known in the past, attend an art exhibition, or witness a community event in a small village (see e.g. Photograph 1 below), for example. Likewise, a conversation in a bar has been as enriching to this research as many of the formal interviews I have undertaken.

The qualitative researcher has been compared to a quilt maker or bricoleur (Denzin & Lincoln 2005: 4) who draws together many different threads and creates tapestries and collages with what they have found. This has been the experience of this research: of gathering together formal interviews; scribbled notes recalling casual conversations; impressions formed through trips; many past experiences; phone calls, or the vivid experience of watching children perform a dance on a significant anniversary for their village, for example. All of these diverse elements inform this thesis in many ways.

This item has been removed for data protection reasons. The unabridged version of the thesis can be viewed at the Lanchester Library, Coventry University.

Photograph 1: Community Event in a village in South-West Kosovo

The Ethnographic Quality of this Research and Case Study Approach

Although I did not set out to create a piece of ethnographic research, this thesis draws upon and reflects a number of ethnographic methods. In particular it shares characteristics with ‘critical’ or ‘interpretative’ ethnography (Denzin 1997; Geertz 1973) alongside shades of what Behar (1997) describes as the genre of poetic anthropology.

As already expressed above, in presenting my findings I felt I needed to place myself *within* the research, making this thesis highly reflexive. Likewise, reflexivity is a defining feature of contemporary ethnography, and in particular of critical ethnography, which ‘abandons the positivist fallacy that research techniques can produce a detached, objective standpoint’ and acknowledges that it ‘makes little sense to ignore more intuitive or subjective ways of knowing’ (Foley & Valenzuela 2005: 218). This research also employs ‘participant observation’ as having spent time getting to know my respondents in-depth I base my findings not only upon what I have been told in formal interviews, but also upon what I have come to understand to be their experiences. This reflects Gold’s assertion that ethnographers must become deeply acquainted with their subjects’ experiences and views (Gold 1997) and Werner & Schoepfle (1987: 257) describe such participant observation as ‘the mainstay of the ethnographic enterprise’. Though forging relationships with respondents might be seen as the antithesis of scientific research in that it can jeopardise objectivity, within ethnography the blurring of lines between researcher and the researched has been interpreted

as both inevitable (particularly in zones of conflict, see e.g. Maja Povrzanovic (1993) in the context of Croatia) and enriching to research (see e.g. Franks 1981).

My use of narratives and storytelling in this research also has much in common with ethnographic methodologies and in particular ‘narrative ethnography’. In her article ‘Narrative Enquiry: Multiple Lenses, Approaches, Voices’, Susan E. Chase describes narrative inquiry as an approach that revolves around ‘an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them’ (2005: 651). According to Chase, ‘narrative ethnography’ involves long-term involvement in a culture or community and focuses deeply on one or a small number of individuals. As Tedlock explains, in narrative ethnography, the researcher and the researched are presented together within a single text ‘focused on the character and process of the human encounter’ (Tedlock, 1992, pxiii). Narrative ethnography enables us as researchers to ‘widen the net’ – broadening the boundaries of what should and shouldn’t be included in research in order to capture the ‘contextual influences and dynamics that shape narrative’ (Gubrium & Holstein 2008: 262).

I have also paid attention to writing style throughout. Though the manner in which one presents findings through writing is scarcely explored within peace research, within the field of ethnography a methodology exists called ‘critical literary ethnography’. According to Denzin (1999) in critical literary ethnography:

The art of good writing is central, whereby the mastery of the writer can lead to an emotional response from the reader, with the goal of stirring the reader to react or respond to what the ethnographer is describing, and encouraging empathy with the subjects of the research.

In this research it has been important for me to spend time crafting sentences that attempt to do justice to what the respondents have shared by creating a connection between respondent and reader. This returns us to Behar’s assertion that ‘poetic anthropology’ must lead us on an ‘unceasing search, for languages of description and analysis that have not grown wooden, languages where the sap still flows’ (Behar 2008: 65).

Having highlighted some of the overlap between this research and ethnographic methodologies, it should be emphasized that presented here is not an explicit piece of ethnography; rather it is peace research, which borrows from in places and is enriched by the ethnographic paradigm. In recent years, ethnographic approaches to peacebuilding research have been identified as promising for their potential to heighten appreciation of local

standpoints and promote empathy between subjects and researchers (see e.g. Richmond 2009). However, as identified by Viktorova (2008), in many ways ethnography and peacebuilding research is in conflict. Notably, peace research favours generalization of its findings, whilst ethnography is wary of generality across contexts. Also, critical ethnography in particular has a strong moral impetus, through which critical ethnographers strive to affect change by evoking moral outrage in the reader. Whilst peace researchers are also looking for change, their research is focused more on developing strategies for action (or on furthering the theoretical discourse).

This research also draws from case study methodology, by seeking to bring information to the peacebuilding field through an in-depth analysis of a single context. In doing so, this research is ‘illustrative’ (Yin 2009), in that it is descriptive in character and seeks to contribute ‘real-life’ experiences to knowledge. As Gerring (2007) explains, the case study approach offers researchers an opportunity to examine a context in-depth in an intensive way, and Gerring argues that a single case studies such as the one presented here can be more valuable than studies that pursue ‘fleeting knowledge’ from a large number of contexts. ‘We gain better understanding of the whole by focusing on a key part’ (2007: 2).

Through focusing on the case of grassroots peace building in Kosovo, my hope is that the findings will have greater implications for peace building in general. At the same time, I remain wary of broad generalization, whereby the findings of this study might be considered automatically transferable to another setting. Instead, the findings from this case study should be viewed as generalizable only in as far as in-depth research from other contexts reveal there to be profound similarities between Kosovo and that context (see below for more on this).

Research validity

‘How different things would be...if the social sciences at the time of their systematic formation in the nineteenth century had taken the arts in the same degree they took the physical science as models’ (Nisbet 1976: 360).

Qualitative and interpretative approaches to peace research, which have much in common with feminist approaches within the social sciences, and which encompass a strong story telling element can raise concerns about reliability and validity (Roberts 1981: xv - xvi). Such approaches might even be at risk of extinction, when we take into account a growing number of studies that take a largely positivist and impact-centred approach to analysing

peace building programmes, or which are solely theoretical. In many ways this reflects the fact that peace research has its roots within the scientific paradigm. As Patomaki explains, 'Peace research was defined as an applied science, and an analogy was often drawn with the role of the physician' (2001: 4).

Though I know first hand the frustrations of trying to find methods that work in peace building and turned to theoretical studies because I wanted to find tried and tested models that might be employed, peace is a subjective phenomenon in so many ways, and every context is different, whilst there are also commonalities. As the subjects of my research kept reminding me: prescribing off the shelf remedies to heal societies, can prove as damaging as they can helpful - however tempting it may be to do so. Thus, this research should not be understood as a scientific study offering solutions. The findings are not tried and tested evidence of how we should build peace. Rather I seek to provide an accurate picture of how those who can be considered peace builders in Kosovo at the grassroots view peace building - as based on their experiences over the seven-year period.

I hope it provokes reflection and debate amongst readers - and points to some important questions we need to ask ourselves when we become engaged as outsiders in such settings. The applicability of the findings of this research is examined further in the final section of this thesis under the heading 'Key Findings and Conclusion'.

Research subjects

The subjects of my field research are local people involved in peace building activities at the grassroots as facilitators and participants, along with members of international organisations who have worked at the grassroots level for extended periods. Alongside, I include findings from a small number of prominent individuals who have in some way 'overseen' peace building efforts - for example a member of local government charged with funding youth projects.

Albanians and international workers in Kosovo have taken the lead in informing this study. Though this was not my original intention as I had sincerely hoped to provide a balance of experiences from across Kosovo's Serbian and Albanian communities, with a small focus on other minority communities also, this was not to be the case. Firstly this was due to practical obstacles in the form of protests, which broke out in minority communities over electricity cuts in March of 2009 at a time when I had scheduled interviews in these areas, which I was

then forced to cancel. This left me with a much smaller sample of Serbian respondents than I had hoped for. However, I also realized that attaining the same depth of understanding about the experiences of those from Serbian communities as from Albanian and amongst the international community would have resulted in an information overload. Trying to involve Serbs in various areas of Kosovo and seeking to accurately capture their diverse experiences sadly proved to be beyond the scope of this research. Similarly the degree of time and commitment necessary for building adequate trust and understanding across all communities was irreconcilable with the timescale of this research project, as I was acting as a single researcher.

However, I have not excluded Serbs and other minorities from this study entirely. Firstly, I worked with Roma communities in Kosovo and have first hand insights to draw on from this, whilst a small number of those from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities shared their experiences during my field research. The initial data collected from Serbs (including attendance at a relevant conference) along with insights gained from working with members of Kosovo's Serbian communities previously, also made a significant contribution.

Whilst this thesis does not reflect an ethnically balanced sample of respondents, or seek to represent the views of all communities in Kosovo, it is worth noting that many viewpoints were shared across communities. In particular, there was little differentiation to be made between negative opinions held by Albanians, Serbs and Roma about how international organisations have operated in Kosovo. Criticisms of NGO capacity-building efforts were echoed across communities, as were concerns over how funding mechanisms have functioned. The key differentiation that should be noted is that, whereas Albanians tended to feel that they had been discriminated against by the international community as it sought to support minority communities after the war, Serbs believed the opposite to be true, perceiving that Albanians had been treated more favourably.

Summary of research phases

Here I summarise the main steps undertaken to arrive at my findings:

Phase One: Preliminary Investigations

The aim of this first phase was to identify a number of specific key concerns I wished to pursue in detail. I conducted an initial review of literature focusing on what had already been written about the Kosovo context from the perspective of peace building at all levels, but particularly at the grassroots. As little has been written on grassroots peace building in

Kosovo I also looked at the findings of grassroots peace building studies in other contexts, for example in Sri Lanka¹⁰ and Palestine¹¹, in order to identify key issues raised in other contexts in order to help me identify gaps in knowledge that might be filled by studying Kosovo. I was also curious to know to what degree overlaps exist between findings in different countries; despite my reservations that peace work often fails to be sufficiently context specific.

I then undertook my first field trip to Kosovo in November 2008, for a period of ten days. This served two purposes. The first benefit was that it provided me with a reintroduction to Kosovo, which I had not visited for two years. I was able to catch up on local news and politics (from the perspective of first hand opinions, rather than news reports) and to visit several towns around Kosovo. I saw that much development had taken place, and also identified a general shift in attitudes that had happened, particularly since independence had been gained some months earlier in February 2008. For example, to my surprise, I observed that some of those living in minority communities that I had known previously seemed to be feeling happier and more secure. Observations such as these helped me to ground my research in the present time, rather than in the context of when I previously lived and worked in Kosovo.

Crucially, I was then able to carry out ten interviews with individuals who acted as the key informants for this study.

Phase Two: Deeper Enquiry

The information gleaned through my field research, once synthesized with my knowledge of existing literature in the field, enabled me to identify a number of key concerns, which I wished to explore in further detail.

I therefore returned to Kosovo for a second research trip during February and March of 2009, for a period of five weeks. During this trip I conducted a further twenty-three formal interviews, along with in the region of ten ‘informal’ interviews which manifested themselves as conversations and informal chats - with people in cafes and bars, on buses, at social events, etc. The insights I gained from such informal encounters also enriched my research and I often noted reflections from these conversations and have used them in the research.

¹⁰ See e.g. Orjulea, C (2003) ‘Building Peace in Sri Lanka: A Role for Civil Society?’

¹¹ See e.g. Abu-Nimer, M (1999) *Dialogue, Conflict Resolution and Change: Arab-Jewish Encounters in Israel*

During this trip I also attended two conferences: one on issues of corruption, and another on issues affecting women and their organisations in minority communities, the latter of which I recorded. On return to the UK, I analysed my data and continued to review existing literature - continually pulling the findings of both primary and secondary sources together, in order to see where the gaps existed and how best my findings from the field could enrich and be enriched by knowledge from secondary sources.

Phase Three: Formalising Results

The main activity encompassed in this third and final phase was to pull all of my findings into a final thesis, characterized by a process of writing and the continual review of literature. I also carried out a small number of additional interviews, in order to check back on accuracy, or enrich existing findings. I conducted a combination of email and face-to-face interviews (from the UK).

Sampling and profiles of respondents

First research trip (key informants)

The key informants of this study were identified by drawing on prior contacts and through the process of snowballing. Before I commenced field research, I identified the following criteria for selecting key informants, in order that they would best inform the research. The key informants were to be either:

- ✓ Local individuals with substantial experience as participants in a range of grassroots peace initiatives in Kosovo between 2001 and 2008
- ✓ International and local individuals who had facilitated a range of grassroots peace building initiatives in Kosovo during the entire period 2001 - 2008
- ✓ Local individuals who had been involved in grassroots peace building initiatives as both facilitators and participants between 2001 and 2008

It was important that I spoke to those that were:

- ✓ A range of ages
- ✓ Males and females
- ✓ Engaged in activities not only in the capital Prishtinë/Priština, but throughout Kosovo

✓ Possessed a broad critical understanding of the grassroots peace building field - i.e. were able to look objectively at their experiences without being swayed by strong allegiances to particular communities or organisations.

✓ Engaged in peace building in different communities

My key informants were more male than female, which reflects the fact that in Kosovo a greater number of males are engaged in civil society activities at a higher level, than females¹².

* See Appendices 1 and 2. for full details of profiling and sampling.

Second Research Trip

Through my first field research trip I identified further interviewees, and was helped also in finding suitable respondents during this trip through further snowballing. I maintained similar criteria for selecting interviewees as that used during my first research trip, with some amendments, as I wished also to:

✓ Include a number of individuals not directly involved at the grassroots, but who possessed an ‘international’ perspective on peace building (for example, members of EULEX and OSCE)

✓ Include a small number of ex-combatants

✓ Include individuals working in North Mitrovicë /Mitrovica and enclaves

✓ Focus mainly on facilitators of grassroots peace building over participants

✓ Focus on those with a range of experience: who have worked at the grassroots but from within different sorts of organisations (e.g. both within local and international organisations)

* See Appendices 1 and 2 for full details of profiling and sampling

Interviews

Phase One

During the first phase of my research I conducted unstructured interviews as I wanted respondents to speak as freely as possible about their experiences. I began each interview by

¹² Though women do play an active role in civil society (and women’s activists in Kosovo would be quick to point out that there have always been women in positions of power), women in Kosovo play a less dominant role than men in most aspects of public life. For example, women earn four times less than men. See UNDP (2004) *Human Development Report Kosovo: The Rise of the Citizen: Challenges and Choices*

asking the respondent firstly to reflect on what their experience of grassroots peace building in Kosovo had been. And secondly, to consider what they saw to be the major issues or concerns, which they had identified through working on, or being involved in, grassroots peace building. I encouraged respondents to think also about the impact that the large amount of international support had had on local peace building. Interviews lasted from thirty minutes to between two and three hours, depending on time availability and willingness of the individuals. Respondents spoke freely and interviews were recorded.

Phase Two

During the second phase of field research I carried out semi-structured interviews. I had identified the main themes I wished to explore in detail and could therefore formulate questions around these themes as and when necessary. These themes acted as something like a checklist of concerns to explore, rather than formal questions. (See below for the list of key themes explored in this phase of field research.)

Phase Three

For the small amount of additional field research I carried out during the third phase of research (primarily by email, but also through face-to-face interviews) I conducted structured interviews. My goal was to verify findings or ask for additional insights on specific issues, rather than to explore new concepts and themes.

Analysis

Phase one

To analyse the data provided by my key informants, I firstly identified the major themes that recurred across transcripts (coding). Secondly, I identified any novel or surprising observations - those made by perhaps only one or more respondents - but which I knew to be unexplored in current peace building literature and which presented interesting avenues for further research. For example, a small number of respondents postulated that they and their friends had been positively changed - not as a result of engaging in international peace efforts - but as a result of socialising with the international facilitators of these projects. Though this was not mentioned by all of my interviewees as significant, I appreciated that it was a novel observation and could recognise its validity based on my own experience, thus I identified it as line of enquiry worthy of further investigation.

Therefore through a process of identifying a) common concerns and b) novel concerns, and by then eliminating those already well-explored in current literature, I drew up a list of the key concerns I wished to investigate further, which corresponded with my research questions. See Table 3 below:

Key Concerns Addressed in Research and Research Questions

Table 3

Key Concerns	Research Question (RQs)
<p><u>Peace and Peace Building:</u></p> <p>Local interpretations of peace & peace building, as compared to internationally favoured perceptions, and the implications.</p> <p>(RQs 2 & 3)</p>	<p>RQ 1:</p> <p>What key factors do those engaged in grassroots peace building in Kosovo identify as fundamental to bringing about lasting change at this level?</p>
<p><u>Multi-ethnicity & Relationship-Building across Communities:</u></p> <p>The strengths and limitations of Multi-ethnicity and contact hypothesis as an objective and approach to achieving peace v. the need for individual or community transformation.</p> <p>(RQs 1 & 2)</p>	<p>RQ 2:</p> <p>How do the direct experiences of those engaged in grassroots peace building in Kosovo either 'conform to' or 'challenge' the approaches that international actors have favoured?</p>
<p><u>Peace Building as "Projects"</u></p> <p>a) short-termism in peace building and the implications.</p> <p>b) The consequences of the "projectization" of peace at the grassroots.</p> <p>c) Hand-over of international projects to local people and international profit over local gain long-term: implications.</p> <p>(RQs 1, 2 & 3)</p>	<p>RQ 3:</p> <p>According to the experiences of those engaged in grassroots peace building, in what ways have outsiders most helped and most hindered their peace efforts?</p>
<p><u>The role of individuals in Peace building</u></p> <p>a) The impact of local volunteerism and solidarity on peace building: helped or hindered by international interventions at the grassroots?</p> <p>b) Individual will to reconcile and build peace v. international pressure to do so and the implications.</p> <p>c) The link between individual transformation and community transformation.</p> <p>d) Mentoring and inspiring young people as a means to build capacity.</p> <p>(RQs 1, 2 & 3)</p>	

Phase Two

I transcribed the interviews and typed up notes from my field notebook from my second field research trip. I looked for common responses across all my data through coding and again kept an eye out for novel ideas or observations. My goal was to build answers to my research questions which accurately reflected: a) respondents experiences and observations, and b) my own first hand experiences and observations during the field research and earlier experiences in Kosovo. I wished to come up with findings that were highly textured - formed of impressions, experiences, respondents' beliefs, and my own observations.

Factors specific to researching Kosovo

There are a number of factors worthy of note when it comes to researching the Kosovo context, summarised below:

Language

Three native languages are spoken amongst those included in this study: Albanian, Serbian and Romanise (within Roma communities), however most of the interviews were carried out in English, as the majority of those interviewed possess high levels of English language skills, in part as a result of their engagement in the internationally-led peace building scene. A small number of interviews were conducted in native languages with the help of a translator.

Anonymity

The identity of respondents remains anonymous throughout this thesis. This was appropriate as some individuals (international and local) wished to remain anonymous to protect themselves and their organisations. In some cases I have gone to some length to hide the identity of respondents, as was their request.

Duplicity

For a number of reasons those working in the field of peace building in Kosovo may say one thing whilst actually feeling or acting contrary to this. This is of course true of people anywhere, however, there are certain aspects to this specific to the Kosovo context worth noting here.

Firstly - and I encountered this in my field research - there is a habit of local people telling outsiders what they feel you want to hear. One reason for this is that for some, internationals

are still perceived as having come to Kosovo to ‘help’ and are thus regarded as saviours and guests (though the initial euphoria which accompanied their arrival has now worn thin). Thus to speak badly of internationals and their endeavours is still perceived by some people as impolite. Fear also plays a role. Individuals may feel concerned that if they say something uncomplimentary about another person, organisation, or community, it will damage them in some way. For example, during one interview, a respondent stared nervously at my Dictaphone whilst propounding enthusiastically about Kosovo’s government and making complimentary statements about the international community. This particular organisation receives government funding and was clearly worried about how my data might be misused¹³. On the whole this was not my experience as I enjoyed a level of trust with respondents - having either worked with them in the past or because we had respected colleagues in common. Also, respondents were often so impassioned by what they wanted to share, that censorship was abandoned as the interview progressed. A contributing factor to duplicity in Kosovo stems also from what one long-term observer of Kosovo’s society described as ‘a hangover from communism’ - namely the notion that one must toe the party line - tell people what they want to hear in order to get along in the society. Thus duplicity has for a long time been a survival instinct in resource-scarce environments such as Kosovo. This relates also to the period of intense oppression experienced by Albanians before the war (1990s) and to in-community unity - themes examined in more depth later in this thesis.

Participants in this research at times also told me what they themselves wanted to believe, which on further enquiry proved not to be entirely true. I came to see that some individuals in Kosovo are scared of saying how they really feel about certain issues (more so to an outsider) - particularly concerning issues surrounding those who perpetrated crimes against their families or communities. This is down at times to the fact that, as many of them are advocates of peace, they do not wish to own up to harbouring their own feelings of bitterness towards others. For example, during interviews respondents sometimes started saying one thing and then censored themselves, or they spoke of certain values, but later admitted to finding these values difficult to adopt in relation to their own inner worlds. This relates also to Johan Galtung’s notion of *deep texts*: those things we know or feel but which we do not allow ourselves to acknowledge (2004: 146). This issue of what people choose to tell you and what they actually believe and feel (consciously or otherwise) can never be fully resolved for a researcher. However, awareness of *why* people respond in certain ways can help us to make good judgements - forcing us at times to read between the lines.

¹³ Respondent 18

Competition, Nepotism and Rivalries

With Kosovo being a resources scarce environment - where people frequently compete over jobs, funding and contracts - it is not surprising that competition is at play. This potentially affects research in this field as individuals may display strong feelings about the work of another organisation or individual, which on closer examination is down to rivalries or jealousy, family loyalties or political ties, for example. Again, this is unavoidable in research of this nature, however awareness of potential influences acting upon people aids our judgement. The issue of competition and rivalry affects both internally and externally driven peace building (Francis 2010: 41), and has been observed by others also in Kosovo (Skendaj 2008: 88).

Territory and Divisions

Kosovo's territory is divided along several lines. Of relevance to this methodology is the fact that the northern part of the city of Mitrovicë /Mitrovica and northern Kosovo experiences a degree of separation from the rest of Kosovo - ethnically and through de facto boundaries, which tie it to Serbia. This part of Kosovo is more prone to violence than other parts of Kosovo and has a strong radical political presence. It has an almost entirely Serbian population, which differentiates it from other parts of Kosovo. Therefore those living and working in these areas experience peace and conflict differently to those living in the rest of the country. Similarly, those living in the enclaves (minority communities mainly comprised of Serbs and other minorities) dotted around Kosovo (See Map ii) have certain perceptions particular to their location. To the degree that it has been possible within the confines of this research, I have included reflections from those living in these areas and highlighted how attitudes can be affected by the area in which one lives. However, this research falls short of being a comprehensive study of grassroots peace building in all areas for reasons stated above.

Personal Experience of Conducting Field Research

On a personal level carrying out this research was not an easy task. I found knocking on people's doors and asking difficult questions uncomfortable, and there came a point where the answers I received ceased to be interesting - as the research took on a more gruelling tone.

As outsiders to a conflict I believe we often derive a certain amount of pleasure, exhilaration even, from being exposed to extreme situations; of hearing stories about life and death told by people whose emotions are raw; who have faced experiences in their lives that we as outsiders seek to understand. However, hearing some of the experiences included in this study touched me deeply and left me shaken and sad. I realized that in all the years I had been visiting Kosovo, I had never truly grasped the magnitude of what happened there, and the depth of people's suffering. I had up until that point been like a spectator to a film.

Essentially I have attempted to approach the writing of this thesis as writing a letter to myself. It is a letter to myself at the age of twenty-one when I was talking to those children I describe at the start. I remember feeling so alarmed by what they were telling me, so defiant that something had to be *done* in order that they wouldn't grow up filled with hatred and risk repeating the violence of the past. I was filled with questions about what we, what *I*, could do. Having had time to reflect on my experiences – of working in Kosovo and of carrying out this research - I attempt to relay back to myself the insights I have gained since. Rather neatly, I arrive at the end of this thesis ten years after I first arrived in Kosovo.

Summary of key terms

Here I provide a brief overview of the key terms used in this research. Some of these terms, and the concerns that arise out of how we use them, are examined in much greater detail in the Literature Review (Chapter 2).

Place Names

For the sake of this thesis I have adopted the single international spelling of 'Kosovo', as opposed to using both the Albanian spelling 'Kosova' and the Serbian spelling 'Kosovo'. This is merely shorthand and does not signify any political bias. I refer to all place names within Kosovo using both the Serbian and Albanian spellings. Though Kosovo is now legally recognized (at time of writing) as an independent country by seventy-four nations, I refer to it as a 'territory' when describing the period prior to 2008 when independence was internationally recognized. In reference to Kosovo post-2008, I use the word 'country'.

Peace and Peace Building

Peace can be understood as on the one hand the absence of violence, and on the other as a situation whereby there is not only the absence of physical, but also *structural* violence (i.e. oppressive and discriminatory regimes) (Galtung 1969). However, in examining peace in the

context of Kosovo, I came to see for myself that - just as Michael Lund (2003: 27) and others had discovered before me - peace can easily become 'a grab bag of unfulfilled human wants' and that attempting to achieve peace can be akin to digging a bottomless pit: it is a process without an end. For example, when do you know that peace has been achieved (beyond cessation of actual physical violence) and who's to say that one person's peace is consonant with another's? This, along with the fact that peace has become somewhat 'contaminated' in Kosovo (an idea introduced earlier in this chapter and examined later in depth), has led me to avoid beginning this thesis with a definitive account of what the terms peace and peace building mean in the context of Kosovo and this study. Rather, I provide in the Literature Review (Chapter 2) an analysis of how peace and peace building has been understood within the field of Peace Studies, before examining in Chapter 4 how the terms peace and peace building are interpreted at the grassroots by those engaged in this research. Further analysis of the terms peace and peace building also takes place as the thesis progresses. For example, in Chapter 5, peace and peace building are examined in relation to multi-ethnicity, and in Chapter 6, peace and peace building are examined from a more personal perspective, particularly related to those of us from outside.

Whilst critiquing the terms peace and peace building throughout this thesis, I recognize that they also serve as useful umbrella terms for those of us operating within this field - acting as reference points to bodies of literature, thought, movements, etc. Thus, though I frequently question their value in relation to the grassroots in Kosovo; I use the terms 'peace' and 'peace building' throughout. Catalogues of other terms exist to describe interventions and research into conflict and post-war settings, among them being: *conflict resolution*; *conflict transformation*; *peace making*; and *peace keeping*, for example. In the Literature Review (Chapter 2) I provide an explanation of these terms and my motivation for primarily using the term 'peace building'.

Grassroots & Grassroots Peace Building Actors

I use the term grassroots to describe activities carried out at the community level. They are not initiated by institutions such as schools or at the level of the municipality. They are not central government initiatives. Rather, grassroots initiatives are characterised by members of communities organising themselves - either as individuals, as members of loose groups or associations, or as registered NGOs. Lederach (1997: 39-40) describes the grassroots as 'representing the masses, the base of society' and as examples of grassroots leaders cites: 'local leaders; leaders of indigenous NGOs; community developers; local health officials;

and refugee camp leaders'. The initiatives encountered in this research have often been small-scale. Even when they have been Kosovo-wide, as have some of the endeavours examined in this research, they have tended to involve relatively small numbers of people and funding at any given time (although this is not a prerequisite for grassroots, it reflects the experience in Kosovo). Crucially, I do not limit this research to the activities and experiences of local actors only. Initiatives carried out by international organisations and individuals working at the grassroots that clearly demonstrated a grassroots approach have been included. The notion of grassroots peace building is examined further within Chapter 2.

Examples of Grassroots Peace building and Peace Builders

Some of the projects that those I interviewed have been involved in as facilitators or participants include: youth dance and theatre productions which broadly speaking encompass a peace message; the production of films by local communities that seek to educate others and overcome prejudice; the establishment of community centres for marginalised populations; peace festivals; sports and outward bounds activities which bring members of communities together; and workshops and training to build the capacity of local organisations. The lines between peace building and community development are blurred (Caritas 2006: 5). However, what all of the activities included in this research share is the aim to bring about positive change in Kosovo at the local community level, which encompasses a will to work towards a more peaceful society, however that might be interpreted.

It should be noted that few local actors explicitly identify themselves as 'peace builders', although a small number do. Rather, many see themselves as working towards uplifting Kosovo's society in diverse ways: be that through encouraging active citizenship; building the capacity of young people; or empowering women, as well as through activities more clearly promoting peace, such as peace camps for children from different communities. Actors involved in a broad spectrum of activities are included here, and in defining them as peace builders I recognize that pursuing positive peace demands a broad approach. Where the boundaries of peace building activities and actors lies is examined in greater detail within chapter 2, and this concern represents a central theme which runs throughout the thesis as a whole.

Conflict and War

In this thesis I use the term war to relate to the 1998-1999 armed conflict between Albanian and Serbian forces and paramilitaries in Kosovo, and to the NATO intervention. I use the term conflict to describe the period before war broke out (particularly in relation to the 1990s), when though violence had not escalated to the point of war, high levels of both structural and physical violence were taking place in Kosovo. I avoid using the term post-conflict throughout; an unhelpful term in Kosovo, as though currently there is little outward physical violence, the conflict remains, as does a level of structural violence.

Time Phases in Kosovo

Following the end of the NATO bombardment in 1999 and the end of the war, Kosovo entered what is considered as the emergency phase (King & Mason 2006: 49). This phase concerned the reconstruction of houses, roads and schools; the re-establishment of a degree of security in the province; and the provision of some healthcare services, for example. By 2001 this phase was to a large extent over: many (definitely not all) people resident in Kosovo had a permanent place to live; a significant number of land mines had been cleared; and most children were back in school. It is fair therefore to label 2001 onwards as a time of development and peace building. A significant number of international NGOs continued to be active in this period, with a steady decline in the number of INGOs from 2001 onwards (Pula 2005: 12).

‘Locals’, ‘Internationals’ and use of the Term ‘We’

In Kosovo common shorthand exists which is used to identify who’s who. This is to label all those from outside of Kosovo as ‘internationals’ and those from within as ‘locals’.

‘International’ is even used at times as a derogatory term - ‘those internationals...’ a local person might have said who was annoyed by decisions made by the UN, for example.

Likewise, at times in this thesis both my respondent and myself revert to use of this short hand.

Thus, in this thesis I use the term ‘international community’ to describe the multitude of actors that belong to either agencies such as the UN or OSCE, or to international NGOs; as well as any other individuals originating from outside of Kosovo actively working on peace building (in the widest sense of the term). Whilst doing so I acknowledge emphatically the clumsy nature of this term, which is rightly criticized for the way in which it homogenizes disparate actors under a single heading. However, in reality it provides a useful abbreviation, and relates also to a worldview adopted by many of my respondents. Where it has been

important to identify actors in more specific terms, I have done so. I use the term local ('local actors', 'local community' etc.) to describe those originating from within Kosovo. Use of the terms international and local is, in a sense, another way of defining actors as either *insiders* or *outsiders*, a theme examined in Chapter 2.

Civil Society, Projects and Programmes

Finally, another term that requires explanation is 'civil society', used to describe actors and groups operating outside the governmental sphere to bring about change in society. NGOs, community-based organisations, associations, activists, movements, are all usually considered members of civil society, for which Orjulea provides the following useful definition,

The civil society concept (...) is used to describe the fact that people meet, communicate, and organize in ways that are not established or controlled by the state, nor by kinship and family ties, and with purposes that are driven neither by the power logics of the state nor by market interests (2003: 196).

Thus, we see here that the term civil society and the term 'grassroots actors' overlap. However, it is with some reluctance that I use the term civil society in this thesis. Firstly, I recognize its shortcomings as, like the term international community described above, it sees disparate actors who favour different approaches homogenized under a single heading. Secondly, use of the term civil society in Kosovo is problematic because much that was organic and home-grown about civil society before the war (if ever it was defined as such at the time) has been co-opted by external actors thereafter, thus civil society in Kosovo - which at its highest expression might be understood as an empowered local mass working for positive change within society - has arguably been compromised by a high levels of external influence. I return to this issue within the Literature Review (Chapter 2), and at other points in this thesis.

The grassroots peace building scene in Kosovo has been dominated by projects and programmes. Organisations developed activities that were supported by donors as time-limited initiatives with aims, objectives, outputs etc. In this thesis I use the word 'project' to describe one-off activities - for example, the production of a community video over a 3 month period, and use the word 'programme' to describe endeavours which had several different components to them - stretching over a longer period. For example, when an organisation placed large numbers of volunteers in communities across Kosovo to initiate

different activities over a number of months, this is categorized as a programme. Where I am not specific, I relate peace building to ‘activities’, ‘initiatives’ or ‘endeavours’.

Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into seven chapters, followed by a final section entitled: ‘Key Findings and Conclusion’.

Immediately following this chapter, I present the Literature Review (Chapter 2). This chapter examines the key themes explored in this thesis and the distinctions between these terms and different schools and approaches to peace building. This is followed by Chapter 3, which provides background information about Kosovo - from a historical perspective, and from the perspective of contemporary attitudes and events. This information contributes to our understanding of the overall context in which grassroots peace building between 2001 and 2008 has taken place.

These three introductory chapters are followed by four analysis chapters, which draw in much greater detail upon my field research. I begin with Chapter 4, which examines grassroots perceptions of peace and peace building. In this chapter I argue that peace in Kosovo became a contaminated term because it was politicised by external agendas, which failed to understand the needs of those who have suffered during the conflict and war. Alongside I emphasise a need in Kosovo to ‘normalise’ every day life instead of being trapped in the limbo state of being a ‘post-war’ or ‘transitional’ territory. This is followed by Chapter 5, which examines grassroots peace building in relation to notions of multi-ethnicity. I emphasise here that peace building at the grassroots essentially became about bringing the sides of the conflict together and building relationships. However, without the necessary capability and willingness amongst young people to look critically at the world around them, fleeting activities forged on a cursory knowledge of contact hypothesis will do little to build peace.

In Chapter 6, I turn my attention to those of us who have partaken in peace building in Kosovo as outsiders in response to harsh criticism levied against us by respondents who feel disappointed not so much by *what* we did, but more *how* we have done it. In this chapter I show that a lack of self-awareness and personal failings such as greed and a desire for recognition have undermined peace building at the grassroots. Finally, Chapter 7 examines the ways in which capacity has been built in Kosovo, particularly amongst youth, using the

programmes of two international organisations as examples. I show how transformation at the level of the individual has rippled out to affect change on a grander scale.

Key findings of this research point to the fact that a ‘deepening’ of peace in Kosovo will ultimately come about through offering young people more opportunities to ‘open up their hearts and minds’ - to broaden their horizons in ways that they feel empowered to view themselves and the world around them through a critical lens. These findings contradict dominant approaches to peace building in Kosovo at the grassroots, which have focused instead upon forging relationships and on notions of reconciliation.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature on Building Peace

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the arguments and definitions that exist in the literature surrounding peace building with a focus on the grassroots, and in doing so to introduce the conceptual framework of the thesis. In this chapter I present key terms, and highlight the important distinctions that need to be made between interpretations of these terms, whilst explaining the ways in which I will be employing these within the thesis.

Peace Studies

In order to make explicit the direction from which I have approached this research, it is important to outline briefly some key principles from the field of Peace Studies, within which this study is situated.

The field of Peace Studies emerged out of the discipline of conflict resolution developed in the 1950s and 1960s, and has traditionally focused not only on peace between states and the actions of state players (i.e. ‘top level’ actors), but also on the activities of civil actors¹⁴. In this discipline the role of groups of citizens is seen as crucial. Peace Studies was founded on an understanding that conflict is a general phenomenon, with similar properties wherever it occurs: be that in international relations, domestic politics, industrial relations, communities, families or between individuals (Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse 2011: 4). It was therefore felt that conflict should to be studied as a phenomenon in its own right. Peace Studies has grown into a highly interdisciplinary field, which seeks to understand the issues at stake by drawing from diverse areas of knowledge including, psychology, sociology and anthropology, political science, economics, international relations, international law and history (Galtung 2010: 20). Additionally, noting the role of religion in conflict, Peace Studies often adopts a multi-faith approach, drawing on the resources for peace from a range of spiritual traditions.

¹⁴ The Conflict Resolution discipline emerged at the height of the Cold War and at a time when rival nuclear arsenals were being built. It was pioneered by figures such as Kenneth and Elise Boulding, Johan Galtung and John Burton, whilst its early origins can be found in the thinking of those who between the First and Second World Wars had attempted to develop a ‘science’ of peace. As research agendas were forged, so peace research was born, marked by the arrival of the Journal for Peace Research (PRIO), established by Galtung in 1964, alongside other journals. Peace studies became the term used to describe the study of peace within academic settings, following the establishment of peace studies programmes within universities, particularly from the 1970s onwards.

Crucially, Peace Studies has been shaped by those with a *direct involvement* in responding to conflict, for example through mediation (Adam Curle, Johan Galtung), grassroots peace building (John Paul Lederach), or peace education (Elise Boulding); thus it is a field grounded in *action*, and forged often upon a deep personal commitment to conflict transformation. Barash makes the observation that the study of peace is not ‘value free’ because ‘peace studies unblushingly acknowledges biases and preferences.’ Whilst remaining ‘scholarly’, it is never ‘disinterested’ as it not only encourages the study of peace, ‘but it in *favor* of peace’ (Barash 2000: 3 emphasis original).

The field of Peace Studies owes much to the writings and actions of Gandhi (Weber 1999), who had a seminal influence on Galtung in particular (often described as a ‘founding father’ of peace studies). It was Gandhi’s conviction that any form of ‘dehumanization’ was violence, and that anyone who claimed as their own ‘more than the minimum that is really necessary for him is guilty of theft’ (Gandhi 1955: 58). Therefore, Gandhi was concerned not only with tackling direct *physical* violence, but with addressing the indirect violence that existed within social structures. Gandhi’s vision informed Galtung’s conviction that peace research must move away from a materialistic bias ‘dealing with bodies dead or alive’, and look instead to more far-reaching agendas. Thus Peace Research has sought to address the ‘mental and spiritual dimensions of violence and human growth and development’ (Galtung 1985: 156).

Further to this, it was Gandhi’s conviction that when it came to addressing violence in a society, the *means* rather than the *end* is of paramount importance. For Gandhi, the notion that any means is justifiable if it seeks to end violent conflict was wholly unacceptable. Gandhi believed that if the world was to have peace, non-violence (*ahimsa*) was ‘the means to that end and no other’ (Gandhi 1947 in Prabhu & Rao 1960), and emphasized that we reap exactly what we sow. The non-violence to which Gandhi adhered extended to the belief that in seeking to bring about change, one must not attempt to *coerce* one’s opponent or appeal to his fear; but rather attempt to convert the wrongdoer by appealing to his heart (Gandhi 1939 in Terchek 2011). In doing so Gandhi employed a method he called *Satyagraha* (seeking of ultimate truth), through which activists for truth, known as *Satyagrahis*, engaged in self-sacrifice, described also as ‘voluntary suffering’. This approach was demonstrated through events surrounding the ‘Salt Marches’¹⁵, whereby *Satyagrahis* refused to defend themselves against police violence and were brutally beaten. It was Gandhi’s conviction that even the most hardened opponent would acknowledge that the punishments that a *Satyagrahi*

¹⁵ In 1930, Gandhi led *Satyagrahis* (activists of truth) on a 23-day nonviolent march to the coast in protest against the British tax system, which made it illegal for Indians to sell or produce salt, this and other protests at this time became known as the ‘Salt Marches’.

was willing to accept in his struggle against injustice was not fair, and thus Gandhi was appealing to the inherent goodness he believed resided in all human beings. Gandhi also sought to address structural violence in Indian society through measures such as initiating village self-sufficiency programmes, and efforts to reform the caste system. Fundamental to Gandhi's vision was his belief that all individuals are responsible for their society (seen through principles such as 'trusteeship'), and that an individual's quest for self-betterment (truth or *Satyagraha*) was for the ultimate benefit of mankind.

An overview of peace building

The term 'peace building' came into common parlance largely as a result of the former UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's 1992 *An Agenda for Peace*. Boutros-Ghali defined peace building as separate to peacekeeping (containment of physical violence) and peacemaking (moving towards settlement), and explained that once these two processes have achieved their aims, peace building begins (Boutros-Ghali 1992). In the Agenda, peace building is described as cooperation between conflicting countries through social and economic development, and actions to prevent further loss of life such as the removal of land mines. Boutros-Ghali emphasizes that 'post conflict peacebuilding is to prevent a reoccurrence' of physical violence (Boutros-Ghali 1992). As Dan Smith points out, the preventative flavour of peace building has much to do with the understanding that as half of all peace agreements fail within five years (many others fail later), the aftermath of one war is potentially the prelude to the next (2004: 20). Thus, according to the UN Secretary General, peace building must be aimed at 'preventing the outbreak, the recurrence or continuation of armed conflict' (UNSG: 2001).

Contemporary post-war peace building missions have been comprised of several strands of activity, and one way of illustrating this is through the 'Utstein Palette' (Smith 2004: 28). This palette divides peace building intervention into four key areas, described as: security; establishing the socioeconomic foundations; establishing the political framework; and generating reconciliation or healing of the wounds of war. See Figure 1 below.

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Figure 1. Utstein Palette (Dan Smith 2004)

According to advocates of the palette, those who engage with peace building should employ and combine strands of activity in a manner that is specific to the country, region and conflict in question, rather like ‘mixing paints’ (Smith 2004: 10).

An alternative yet not too dissimilar approach to peacebuilding has been advocated by John Paul Lederach (1997) who has presented peace building from the perspective of building ‘peace constituency’ within areas affected by conflict. He describes building peace as a ‘long-term commitment’ aimed at establishing an indigenous ‘infrastructure’, which cuts across levels of a society and ‘empowers the resources for reconciliation from within that society and maximizes the contribution from outside’ (1997: xvi). Similar to the Utstein palette, the ‘peace constituency’ described by Lederach comprises different actors and activities: from elite leaders and decision-makers at the top, through to leaders of social organisations, churches, and journalists in the mid-level, and grassroots community leaders at the base. This approach is illustrated using his Pyramid

Model (see Figure 2 below). Lederach emphasises that building peace must take place at *every* phase of conflict, not simply within a short timespan following war, as does Diana Francis (2010; 2002), and these scholars stress the primary role of local actors in peace building.

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Derived from John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 39.

Figure 2: Pyramid Model (Lederach 1997)

In recent years, international peace building missions and approaches have attracted intense criticism from scholars and practitioners alike. This criticism spans from more moderate complaints that peace building efforts fail to develop the necessary peace constituency (in the Lederach vain) in societies emerging from violent conflict, as has been identified in the context of Kosovo (CDA 2006); through to accusations that peace building efforts are little more than post-cold war ‘civilising missions’ (Oliver Richmond 2009), which represent a pernicious form of social

engineering. Certain scholars have identified the lack of distinction to be made between peace building and statebuilding (Michael Barnett & Christoph Zürcher 2009) and in the case of Kosovo, it might be argued that peace building was favoured because it was seen as a less contentious term whilst there is essential no distinction to be made peace building and state building in this context (Rita Augestad Knudsen 2010)¹⁶.

Much contemporary peace building critique originates from within the field of International Relations (IR). Within this discipline, peace building has traditionally been seen as maintaining stability through power structures and the preservation of interests (*realist* perspective), or as creating a world order regulated by international organisations, norms and standards (*idealist* perspective). *Poststructuralist IR*, however, places a greater emphasis on the role of power relations in peace building, along with justice, and the roles of ‘ordinary people’ (Thania Paffenholz 2010: 50). Thus, whilst IR is essentially concerned with peace between states and top-level actors, there is a degree of overlap between peace building viewed from a *Poststructuralist* perspective, which pays attention to civil actors, and the study of this field from within Peace Studies. Richmond (2002) has identified four generations of peace building, whilst Paffenholz (2010) merges her own analysis with Richmond’s, in order to create a fifth. The five schools of peace building proposed by Paffenholz, which employ different terminologies, conceptual understandings, approaches and actors, are summarized as: The *conflict management* school; the *conflict resolution* school; the *conflict transformation* school; the *complimentary* school; and the *alternative discourse* school. I will use these terms to examine the different approaches to peace building.

The *conflict management* school traditionally concerns the activities of external diplomats from bilateral and multilateral organisations and is essentially outcome-orientated; it’s main goal being the short-term management of conflicts, seen for example through peace accords (Paffenholz 2010). The *conflict resolution* school focuses to a greater degree on solving the problems that underlie the conflict. As Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham & Tom Woodhouse (2011: 31) explain, conflict resolution seeks to address the deep-rooted sources of conflict, in order that ‘behaviour is no longer violent, attitudes are no longer hostile, and the structure of the conflict has been changed’. Conflict resolution that is truly transformative (and not only centred on reaching a settlement between conflicting parties) has been termed as ‘constructive conflict resolution’. The

¹⁶ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the overlap that exists between statebuilding and peace building and the theoretical and ideological concerns that surround usage of these terms. For discussion on this theme in the context of Kosovo see Rita Augestad Knudsen (2010).

complementary school is essentially a congruence of conflict management and conflict resolution, which has introduced the notion of multi-track diplomacy, and differentiates between approaches and actors engaged in peace building according to the time phases within interventions.

Of greatest relevance to this research are the final two schools of peace building proposed by Paffenholz; and above all the field of *conflict transformation*. Conflict Transformation emerged out of the awareness that conflict is an inevitable (and not wholly negative) phenomenon and therefore our efforts should be not to *resolve* it (if such a thing were possible) but to transform conflict in order that it is no longer destructive. Lederach has been the greatest advocate and pioneer of this approach, along with Francis (2010; 2002). According to Lederach, conflict transformation understands peace as embedded in justice, whereby,

It emphasizes the importance of building right relationships and social structures through a radical respect for human rights and life. It advocates nonviolence as a way of life and work. (2003: 4).

Conflict transformation has the most in common with Gandhi's approach to social change discussed in the previous section, as it plays close attention to the means by which peace is brought about, emphasising the role of local actors. Crucially, those approaching peace building from the perspective of conflict transformation tend to have direct experience, alongside an investment in finding ways out of violent conflict. Thus, whilst such actors are critical, they are also engaged in seeking mutually beneficial methods for transcending violence. In essence, it is a field informed by practice, with the primary goal of informing practitioners. My choice to employ the term peace building in place of conflict transformation reflects Francis' analysis (2010) that it has become the favoured term in NGO circles used also at the governmental level. However much that, in essence, is conflict transformation informs and shapes this thesis¹⁷.

Relevant here also is the alternative discourse school, which is the term used by Paffenholz to describe the literature which examines peace building primarily through the lens of discourse analysis. This literature seeks to deconstruct the theory and practice of those who engage in peace building, and to critique it in relation to the paradigm of 'liberal peace'.

Liberal peace is the notion that democratic countries rarely go to war with one another, based upon Immanuel Kant's 1795 work 'Zum Ewigen Frieden' (Perpetual Peace) and on contemporary research evidence highlighting causal links between democracy and peace since. Liberal peace has

¹⁷ I have adopted the spelling 'peace building' as two words as a symbolic gesture – therefore tying it to the earliest appropriations of the term and its transformative (rather than preventative) roots.

become the dominant approach to peacebuilding employed by peacebuilding missions around the war in the past twenty years (Mac Ginty 2012: 391). Those in favour of the liberal peace approach argue the need to impose a new order on societies emerging from war by, for example, promoting democracy through elections and establishing a neoliberal economy.

However, critics of this principal argue that rapid political and economic liberalization in post-war contexts does not in fact lead to peace, and that greater focus should be placed on strengthening domestic institutions (Woodward 2002). According to Pugh (2005: 1-2), the ‘aggressively promoted orthodoxy’ that market liberalisation leads to peace essentially disempowers post-war countries by creating reliance on privatisation and foreign investments, and by reducing the role of the state.

Others opposing the liberal peace model argue that the peace building literature has essentially become trapped in the ‘liberal imperative’ and removed from the experience of everyday people and their ordinary lives (Richmond 2005; 2008). The overwhelming message of this school is that peacebuilding has become a self-referential system, which has lost its connection to the real world and to the needs of real people.

Various parallels can be found between this research, which analyses the experiences of local people in Kosovo, many of whom are critical of the international peace building mission, and the literature that has emerged critiquing liberal peace. Particularly relevant is Richmond’s analysis that creating institutions without local participation and legitimacy will not work (Richmond 2007), and that an emancipatory approach to peacebuilding is needed, one that empowers individuals to ‘negotiate and develop a form of human security that is fitted to their needs’ (2007: 461). Also relevant is Mac Ginty’s assertion that what is experienced in post-war peacebuilding contexts is a sort of ‘hybrid peace’, the actions and consequences of which consists of an interplay between those driving forward an agenda of liberal peace (essentially external actors), those who benefit from the intervention, and those local agents who either adapt to, resist or ignore the liberal peace agenda (2010). Mac Ginty observes that a fusion of peace approaches occur for example around issues of reconciliation, creating a ‘hybridized peace that is in constant flux, as different actors and processes cooperate and compete on different issue agendas’ (2010:397). Additionally, scholars, such as Duffield (2002) and Mosse (2005) (sometimes described as ‘ethnographers of aid’) have critiqued the unequal power relationships that exist between the global north and south including in relation to policy formation, and highlight the complexities that underpin violence in local contexts.

Whilst my research is critical also of the liberal peace model, different to the literature of alternative discourse school, which is essentially concerned with conceptualising peacebuilding and understanding how certain models of intervention are *constructed* and *maintained*, this research is nourished by experiences in the field and by a collective desire across insider-outsider divides in Kosovo to devise better strategies for *action*. This makes it more akin to what Heathershaw (2008:20) refers to as the ‘civil society peacebuilding discourse’, and to what others describe as conflict transformation, than to the contemporary discourse analysis that makes up the alternative school. The fact that this research not only critiques peacebuilding at the grassroots but also makes suggestions for a more positive intervention, sets it aside also from literature on the ethnography of aid, which seeks instead ‘to come to terms with the phenomenon of aid in a pragmatically disinterested way’ (Gould 2004: 1).

Whilst approaching and understanding peace building from the perspective of institutions, political structures, and political economy, is crucial, and as Lederach (1997) emphasises peace building must take place at *all* levels of society, it should be emphasised once more that this is a single case study which seeks to understand how the lives of individuals in Kosovo have been enriched or otherwise by their experiences of peace building at the *grassroots*. Where peace building at the political level is addressed in this thesis it is essentially in an attempt to understand how empowering young people over a period time or generations might ripple out to effect change at the top-level in the long-term. This research has been undertaken with an understanding that positive activities at the grassroots have the potential to lead to structural change long term through the emergence of a more open and less burdened leadership at the political level in the future (a theme examined particularly in chapter 7).

Whereas the proponents of liberal peace argue that rapid political, economic and institutional reform represents the first and essential steps to peace, the approach taken in this thesis is that without a concerted effort at the grassroots to empower a new generation of young people who are able to look beyond the pain and conflict of the past, transformation at political and institutional levels will be negatively impacted in the long-term. This reflects the more holistic approach to peace building espoused by writer-practitioners such as Francis (2010) that peace building must be sustained and must value the role of civil actors. Whereas the literature that critiques liberal peace building for being imposing and hegemonic is relevant here, this research remains committed to finding more positive approaches to intervention. As Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse argue, the point is not to abandon conflict resolution because it is western, but to find ways to enrich western and non-western traditions through their mutual encounter (2011: 7).

Phases of intervention

Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse (2011: 14) have developed an ‘Hourglass Model’, which helps to illustrate how different conflict responses are employed at different phases of the conflict. Three phases of intervention are identified: ‘conflict containment’; ‘conflict settlement’; and ‘conflict transformation’. In this model, the narrowing of the hourglass represents a corresponding narrowing of political space, which widens with the de-escalation of conflict.

According to this model, conflict transformation encompasses the *deepest* level of peace building and involves large numbers of local actors. Its ultimate goal is reconciliation. Conflict settlement can be described as ‘elite peace building’ – negotiation and mediation involving small numbers of political and external mediators, which is concurrent with the *conflict management* school described by Paffenholz above. Conflict containment involves military actors and encompasses preventive peacekeeping, war limitation, and post ceasefire peacekeeping, whilst seeking to constrain the fighting and bring about a termination of direct physical violence. This model is a useful tool for differentiating what might be described as ‘elite peacebuilding’, which forms the substance of conflict settlement, and deeper levels of peacebuilding, which includes reconciliation – and is tied to *conflict transformation*. See Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Hourglass Model (Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse 2011)

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Peace building as pacification

Following the Agenda for Peace it has been argued that peace building has broken from its transformative roots (Francis 2010). Peace building is often misconceived as a ‘new term’ (Heathershaw 2008), when it was in fact introduced into the critical sphere by Galtung in 1975, where it was used to describe a process of addressing the underlying causes of conflict. Far from being conceived as a *preventative* measure, Galtung’s appropriation of the term was rooted in an understanding of the need to transform the structural elements that underpin the healthy functioning of a society. Those who approach peace building from the perspective of conflict transformation recognize that ending violence demands a much more fundamental change in a society than replacing one regime for another (Francis 2010: 60).

Francis provides a critique of contemporary peace building using a typology illustrating what she describes as ‘Two World Views’. In this model, Francis divides ‘true peace building’ from what she defines instead as ‘pacification’. According to Francis, true peace building is grounded in qualities such as mutual cooperation and care, and involves collaboration with local actors, as well as being founded on the principles of nonviolence. Pacification however, which Francis argues is the current dominant approach, is based upon an understanding of peace as the need for stability and hegemony (Francis 2010), characterised by ‘top down’ attitudes. (See figure 4).

TWO WORLD VIEWS:

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Figure 4. Two World Views (Francis 2010)

Also relevant to this debate is Simon Fisher and Lada Zimina's (2009) typology within which a distinction is made between peace building that is truly 'transformative', and that which is 'technical'. According to this definition, technical peace building is concerned only with ending a specific situation, whilst transformative peace building strives for 'positive peace', through agendas set by local communities, where solidarity is favoured, as are relationships (See figure 5 below). The approaches espoused by Francis and Fisher & Zimina are concurrent with the values of conflict transformation.

Conflict Analysis

Fundamental to any peace building intervention is adequate conflict analysis (Chigas & Woodrow 2009). Galtung identifies three main elements that make up the *substance* of conflict. These are 'attitudes', 'behaviours' and 'contradictions'. *Attitudes* cover emotion (feeling), cognition (belief) and conation (desire, will). *Behaviour* determines cooperation or coercion - gestures signifying conciliation or hostility. *Contradictions* are the 'incompatibility of goals' and the parties' perceptions and misperceptions of each other and of themselves, which are influenced by emotions such as fear, anger, bitterness, and hatred. Therefore according to Galtung, a solution must include all three; otherwise the possibilities for sustainable peace are 'slim' (Galtung 1969). Galtung's model highlights the need to address conflict not only from the perspective of what we interpret to be the need but also from the perspective of interest and position. This highlights the need to be holistic (interdisciplinary) and to work on the emotional, as well as rational levels in conflict. Another useful conflict analysis tool is the tree model – which urges us to view conflict from the perspective of the causes (at the roots), the core problem (the trunk), and the effects (symbolised by the leaves). See Fisher et al. (2000: 29).

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Figure 5. Technical & Transformative Approaches to Peacebuilding (Fisher & Zimina 2009)

The goal of peace building

Introduction

This research seeks to understand how those of us from outside - the *external drivers* of peace building - have best supported, or otherwise, peace building efforts in Kosovo at the grassroots. It is important therefore to understand how the term peace – the goal of peace building - has been

interpreted within existing literature, and to identify the debates that surround understandings of this term.

Peace: Beyond Cessation of Physical Violence

The two key concepts that have helped to deepen our understanding of peace are *structural violence* (1969); and the notion of *positive and negative peace* (1964) - ideas introduced into the field by Johan Galtung, influenced of Gandhi. Structural violence is exemplified by, for example, exploitation, alienation, marginalisation, poverty, deprivation, and misery, which exist when basic needs - for security, freedom, welfare and identity - are not being met (Galtung 1969). Therefore, 'negative peace' is the absence of physical violence, whilst 'positive peace' is a situation where society is free from exploitation and where justice has been attained alongside protection for human rights (Galtung 1985: 145). Along with direct and structural violence, Galtung introduced the idea of *cultural violence* - which refers to those aspects of our cultures that are used to legitimize direct or structural violence (Galtung 1990a: 2). Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse provide a useful example to illustrate Galtung's models of conflict, whereby: direct violence = children are murdered; structural violence = children die through poverty; and cultural violence = whatever blinds us to this or seeks to justify it. Thus we end direct violence by changing conflict behaviour, structural violence by removing structural contradictions and injustices, and cultural violence by changing attitudes (2011: 11).

Peace as 'Boundless' or Utopian

The sort of broad understandings of peace described above have been criticized for being too open-ended (Lund 2003), and Galtung argues also that there must be something 'concrete' and 'explicit' in our understandings of peace, summed up through our vision of 'the world we would like to see'

It is not enough to say that peace is the absence of something or the other; much more concrete images must be provided (2008: 4).

However, Lund argues that peace should be explicitly understood in relationship to addressing the *causes* of the conflict (Lund 2003: 25), an opinion echoed by Chigas and Woodrow (2009: 48-49), who assert that a vision of peace should be forged on sound analysis of the *key driving factors* of the conflict.

The word peace is perceived by some as too idealistic, or subjective a goal. Curle (1972: 1) describes the term as possessing a 'vague, idealistic, emotional flavour', as it is 'a word beloved by politicians, preachers, and the mistier sorts of do-gooder'. Gawerc (2006: 438) observes that the word peace is problematic, not least because different groups in a conflict often define peace differently. Likewise, peace risks being viewed as utopian thus it may appear unachievable (Miall

2000), whilst utopian visions of peace are criticized as they often favour the vision of peace of one conflict party's over another's, for example in the context of Palestine-Israel (Amnon 2005). This relates to Mac Ginty's (2009: 692) observation that peace is 'invented' and 'reinvented' by power holders to suit each context, and to the canon of literature critiquing the 'liberal' peace, which is imposed onto populations from outside (Bendaña 2003; Richmond 2005).

The peace pioneer Elise Boulding argues, however, that utopian concepts of peace are valuable because, without the ability to imagine something 'different and better than what currently exists', it is not possible to strive for positive change (2000: 29). Galtung agrees, emphasizing that, 'it is exactly these kinds of images that, throughout history, have driven people into great action' (Galtung, 2008: 4). Perhaps Lederach addresses this debate best when he writes, 'conflict transformation will be only utopian if it is unable to be responsive to *real-life challenges, needs, and realities*' (Lederach 2003: 20 emphasis mine). Thus what we should be seeking is a 'viable utopia' (Galtung 2008: 4).

Peaceful Relationships and Cultures of Peace

One approach to overcoming the 'boundlessness' of the term peace has been to approach it from the perspective of relationships, which largely finds expression at the grassroots as a 'people-to-people' approach (also known as a 'contact' approach) to peace building (Lederach 1997), which will be discussed in detail later. Curle suggests that the term peace can be brought 'down to earth' by only using it in the context of *peaceful relationships*,

In fact what we mean by peace, if we think of it without getting hung up on the emotion, is that two people, or groups, or nations are getting on well together (1972: 1).

This understanding of peace is reflected in the analysis of peace building provided by Abu-Nimer, who writes, 'Peacebuilding is about bringing change in human relationships and institutions' (2003: 20), along with Lederach's analysis that 'in conflict transformation relationships are central. Like the heart in the body, conflicts flow from and return to relationships' (Lederach 2003: 17).

Another approach, which does not place an emphasis solely on relationships is found in the notion of 'Peace Cultures', a term favoured by Elise Boulding in particular, who explains that a culture of peace is one that 'promotes peaceable diversity'. It includes:

'lifeways, patterns of belief, values, behavior, and accompanying institutional arrangements that promote mutual caring and well-being as well as an equality that includes appreciation of difference, stewardship, and equitable sharing of the earth's resources among its members and with all living beings' (Boulding 2000: 1).

Thus peace is seen here in relation to the development of individuals, and of the society of which they are a part. A culture of peace has been described as a society, not where there is no conflict, but where a capacity has been developed for dealing with conflicts nonviolently (Graft, Kramer & Nicolescu 2010: 58). In fostering such a culture, the emphasis is placed on the capacity of individuals to develop in ways that reflect ‘respect for life, for human beings and their dignity (...) the rejection of violence in all its forms’ (Aweis 1999: 249). The United Nations declared 2000 - 2010, the International Decade for the Culture of Peace, and encouraged individuals to sign a manifesto as a pledge of their commitment to upholding its values, which included the ‘respect for all life’ and ‘sharing with others’ (UNESCO 2000). However, critics of the Cultures of Peace paradigm argue that it is as woolly and idealistic a notion as peace itself (Kramer & Nicolescu 2010).

Approaches, activities and roles in grassroots peace building

In this section I examine the key approaches, activities and roles inherent in grassroots peace building. I begin with the understanding that peace can manifest at the level of the individual, before examining the ways in which peace building at the grassroots often centres instead on forging relationships. Finally, I examine the methods and debates that surround how grassroots peace building adds up to peace on a grander scale (also described as ‘peace writ large’).

Peace and the individual (the micro & the macro)

Interpretations of peace building often diverge at the point at which some see peace as stemming from *individual* transformation, whilst others see peace building as a more *structural, cultural* or *political* concern. Gawerc (2006: 437) identifies a ‘heated discussion’ in the literature between those who approach conflict from the structural perspective, and those who perceive it to be rooted in the psychosocial (i.e. the inter-relation between social factors and individual thought or behaviour) or psychocultural (i.e. interaction between psychological and cultural factors within an individual or group). Lederach (1996: 19) also remarks that there seems to be a certain tension surrounding how to pursue social change, which too often is posed as an either/or contradiction: ‘Is social change fundamentally a process of *personal* or *systemic* transformation?’ (emphasis mine). Lederach perceives Paulo Friere’s approach to be correct in that Friere understands social change as including both (Lederach 1996: 19).

The Collaborative for Development Action (CDA) provides a useful table summarizing these two approaches to change. According to CDA (2009), in peace building, individual/personal change concerns addressing attitudes, values, ideas, as well as

relationships, whilst socio-political change is tackled through the reform of institutions, legislation, ceasefire agreements, and constitutions, for example.

When peace is approached from the perspective of individuals following violent conflict, it is often in relation to notions of trauma (specifically Post Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD) whereby following war, individual trauma is seen as a barrier to peace at the community level as a whole (Van der Merwe & Vienings 2001: 343). This is forged on the understanding that a lack of *inner* peace amongst individual ripples out and negatively impacts society.

However, Clark emphasizes that we must not view the emotions encountered in contexts such as Kosovo's solely through the lens of trauma, and argues that strong emotions do not represent a disorder. He explains,

I have friends who have felt anger, grief and betrayal during the wars of Yugoslav succession, and whose opinions and perceptions have changed. Of course, there is a connection between their emotions and their rational arguments. However, to hypostatise this change, insisting that its substance is an *emotional disorder*, would be an insult to their intelligence and rationality (Clark: 2002: 14 emphasis mine).

Kraybill describes a phenomenon encountered in conflict settings whereby emotions stand in the way of individuals partaking in a process of reconciliation, and he describes this in terms of a 'battle between head and heart':

People in conflict frequently carry an internal battle between head and heart. By "head" I mean their values and conscience. By "heart" I mean their emotions. People think they ought to be reconciled with others, but their hearts are not ready (Kraybill 2006).

Whilst there has been substantial literature examining PTSD in Kosovo (see e.g. Wang et al. 2010; Roth, G. et al. 2006), little-to-no analysis has taken place into how negative emotions resulting from the conflict and war, have impacted on the ability of individuals to partake in a process of peace building. Yablon argues that the role of emotions in peace building initiatives deserves greater attention (2006: 218).

Promoting Reconciliation and Coexistence through Contact Hypothesis

A key approach to peace building at the grassroots is through activities aimed at promoting reconciliation and coexistence, which in multi-track conflict resolution relates to notions of

building social cohesion and finding common ground. It is largely felt that without efforts to address reconciliation and coexistence (terms I examine below), a reoccurrence of violence is possible.

Afzali & Colleton (2003) suggest that thousands of projects aimed at promoting coexistence exist around the world and provide a typology of examples including: arts activities such as poetry and music; the visual arts which provides ‘a forum for members of different groups to work side by side with former enemies in exercising their creativity and talents’ (2003: 9); sports activities; and educational initiatives including multi-ethnic schools. Grassroots activities working in this way utilize a ‘people-to-people’ approach to peace building, whereby building relationships is central (Lederach 1997). According to CDA (2009: 11) peace building efforts that focus on building relationships and trust across conflict lines - increasing tolerance, and increasing hope that peace is possible - often produce dramatic transformations in attitudes, perceptions and trust.

Contact hypothesis

Much of this sort of activity is forged on notions of ‘contact hypothesis’ (Allport 1954) and on understandings of intergroup contact theory, through which it has been shown that under certain circumstances contact between divided groups plays a defining role in reducing prejudice. In his book *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport argues that intergroup contact can have a positive impact on intergroup relations, provided that four conditions are met. These are that: 1) there is equal group status between the parties; 2) that the parties share common goals; 3) that they enjoy a level of cooperation; and 4) that they had the support of authorities, law or custom (Allport 1954: 281). On-going research from the field of peace psychology grounded in social-psychological theory has largely supported the effectiveness of these four conditions (see Pettigrew 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp 2006; Hewstone 2003). Hewstone et al. state categorically that in deeply segregated societies ‘contact is an essential part of any solution’ (2006: 116). Hewstone suggests that whilst contact is not the *only* ‘cure’ for prejudice (citing other complementary examples such as promotion of empathy, cooperative learning, and multicultural education programmes), ‘all these interventions involve, to a greater or lesser extent, intergroup contact’ (Hewstone 2003: 355, see also Hewstone Rubin & Willis 2002). In a meta-analysis of contact research, Pettigrew and Tropp (2000: 95) found that 94% of studies determine face-to-face interaction between members of different groups to play a role in prejudice reduction. Examples of this approach in peace building can be seen in the context of Israel-Palestine for example, where Abu-Nimer has facilitated Arab-Israeli ‘encounters’ amongst young Israelis and Palestinians (Abu-Nimer 1999); as well as amongst mixed education initiatives in Northern Ireland (Niens & Cairns 2005).

Four interrelated processes have been identified as helpful in explaining how and why contact is effective. Firstly it is thought that through contact individuals learn about the ‘outgroup’ (i.e. the larger group of which the individual partaking in contact represents) thus this challenges misconceptions. Secondly, contact affects an immediate change in behaviour within the contact setting through participants being required to interact (with behavioural change understood to be a precursor to attitudinal change). Thirdly, contact presents the opportunity for effective ties to be established between the groups. Finally, through contact, individuals undergo intergroup reappraisal - i.e. reassess how they view ‘the other’ (Pettigrew 1998: 65). However, a number of findings challenge these assumptions, or point to how contact must be facilitated in certain ways to maximize possible effect. Pettigrew (1998: 70) observes that analysis of cognitive research shows that many factors influence how the mind processes attitudes and stereotypes and it has been found that stereotypes will only be altered if the outgroup’s behaviour is *starkly inconsistent with their stereotype* and if the outgroup members are seen as *typical*. Cook (1978) insists that *stereotype disconfirmation* is crucial for contact to have a successful outcome.

Concerning the third precept, it has been shown that the creation of lasting friendships (and the positive emotions which span from these, including increased empathy) is fundamental to generating ties (Pettigrew 1998). This analysis mirrors findings from the context of Northern Ireland, where Trew observes that brief short-term contact between protestants and Catholics has had little to no impact on addressing sectarianism in society (Trew 1986), whilst Niens and Cairns (2005: 340) emphasize that for contact to have a positive effect it must be *long-term and sustainable*. Pettigrew (1998: 76) states ‘Optimal intergroup contact requires time for cross-group friendships to develop’, and emphasizes the need to adopt a long-term perspective.

Other factors identified as important for contact to have a lasting impact include a common language and voluntary contact (Wagner & Machleit 1986), whilst findings from Israel suggest that the group’s initial views of one another cannot be too negative (Ben-Ari & Amir 1986). Evidence also shows that if an individual perceives him or herself to have been *forced into a contact situation* - even more so if the perception is that the purpose is to enforce attitude change - backlash effects can occur where the individual becomes even more negative towards the outgroup (Hewstone & Brown 1986).

The notion of ‘generalization’ - the term used to explain how positive experiences within the contact setting may have broader and more lasting consequences on society, has been examined in depth. Substantial evidence suggests that positive experiences of intergroup contact *do not*

necessarily affect a change of attitudes and behaviours towards those beyond the group (Hewstone & Brown 1986; Pettigrew 1998). Hewstone & Brown (1986: 20) argue that,

As long as the individuals are interacting as individuals, rather than as group members, there is little basis either for expecting any attitude change to be generalized through the group or for one person to extrapolate the positive attitudes towards one individual to other outgroup members.

To enhance the positive long-term effects of contact Hewstone & Brown (1986) argue the need to focus efforts around certain *contextual* conditions of the contact, and suggest four, which are that: contact makes use of ‘superordinate goals’ (i.e. reliance on and between the groups); that there is cooperation rather than competition between the groups; that there is multi-group membership and cross cutting social categories; and that equal status is achieved through efforts to overcome the negative features and expectations as a result of each group’s self-image.

Through his experience of facilitating inter-religious peace building, Abu-Nimer has proposed a ‘3H model’ to illustrate how activities which bring together participants from different religious groups affect a change within participants. The three ‘Hs’ represent the head, the heart, and the hands; alongside, this being a religious approach, ‘the spirit’. Abu-Nimer explains that these three aspects correspond to cognition, emotion, and behaviour and that interveners are successful when,

They can influence the parties' thinking, engage them in a positive emotional experience, and show them ways to apply their new learning through hands on experience or chances for action (2001: 689).

Impact of initiatives forged on contact hypothesis in Kosovo

Contrasting evidence has emerged from Kosovo concerning the impact of efforts to foster reconciliation and coexistence using this approach. CDA highlight the lack of understanding amongst members of the international community as to how reconciliation might be fostered through peace building, and describe the strategies articulated for transforming inter-ethnic relations as sentiments such as: ‘anything that brings people together’; ‘anything that gets them talking’; ‘promoting collaboration’; ‘good neighbour behavior’; or ‘Serbs and Albanians talking and laughing together’ (2006: 57). CDA argue that whilst these may serve as approaches or potential results of activities, ‘they constitute neither a vision nor a strategy’ (2006: 57; see also Donini et al. 2005).

In Kosovo, activities broadly aimed at fostering coexistence and reconciliation have been described as ‘multi-ethnic’ projects, and have concerned facilitating contact between members of different

ethnic groups. CDA's (2006: xi – xiii) analysis of the impact of multi-ethnic activities is critical of this approach in Kosovo, and concludes that programmes have failed to move beyond the 'entry point' for interethnic contact and worked around the issues that divided people; whilst targeting only those who are easy to reach such as women and youth, and avoiding more radical geographical areas. The conclusion reached from this report is that peace building programming had only had a modest impact on inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo. The reasons given for this include that individual ties forged through peace building activities did not translate into networks 'of civic engagement that connect people across ethnic lines, build trust and facilitate communication and cooperation on issues of public concern' (CDA 2006: ix). Peace building efforts are seen as having failed to address driving factors behind the conflict (missing persons, war crimes, security and justice, etc.) as well as for failing to facilitate efforts to talk about the conflict or the issues communities have identified as obstacles to peace (CDA 2006).

In contrast, Shpend Voca (2009) reports positive findings from the efforts of one organisation in particular to affect prejudice through dialogue meetings between members of the Albanian community and Serbian returnees in Fushë Kosovë /Kosovo Polje, organised along the lines of the principles of contact hypothesis. Voca concludes that inter-ethnic dialogue has reduced prejudice and improved communications in this context, as seen through an increasing number of greetings, and longer conversations in a friendly manner between the parties (Voca 2009: 43). Regarding generalisation, Voca argues that such activities do hold potential for prejudice reduction and improved communication among uninvolved community members in dialogue meetings (Voca 2009: 43).

Impact of contact hypothesis in other contexts

In studies that have sought to evaluate the impact of people-to-people approaches to building peace at the grassroots in other parts of the world, criticism has emerged concerning the ability of such efforts to affect lasting change. In studies conducted by Paffenholz (2010) and Orjuela (2003) these researchers found that civil society could make only a limited contribution to building relationships across divided communities. In the context of Sri Lanka, Orjuela observed that civil society actors

Have to struggle hard to truly bridge ethnic cleavages and join people in a divided country in the quest for a jointly defined peace (2003: 210).

Paffenholz's six-country evaluation of civil society peace building concludes that most relationship-orientated initiatives were ineffective and cites socialization as the key barrier; explaining that when groups in society preach hatred and formulate enemy images over generations, 'the existence of few social cohesion initiatives cannot be very effective' (2010: 396). Paffenholz also identifies day-to-day segregation of communities as a barrier. These observations

fit with the findings of Pettigrew (1998: 78) whose analysis of the contact approach acknowledges that societies themselves shape contact effects and that societal contexts can severely limit all forms of intergroup contact. Likewise, in a study in Northern Ireland it was observed that cross-community cooperation has been the least easily attained goals within grassroots programming (Racioppi & O'Sullivan 2007).

In the context of Kosovo, there remains a need for a coherent analysis of how efforts aimed at advancing coexistence and reconciliation using a contact approach have been experienced amongst actors at the grassroots. This particularly concerns how those who have taken part in such activities as facilitators or participants have engaged with the overall objective of reconciliation and of forging a multi-ethnic society, and whether sustained involvement in such projects have succeeded in penetrating the negative feelings about the other internalized as a result of the conflict and war in order to affect what is described by Kraybill (2006) as 'heart reconciliation' (i.e. an emotional will to reconcile). Likewise if they affect individuals at the levels of the heart, hand, and head, in the ways described by Abu-Nimer above.

Capacity Building

Another dominant approach to peace building at the grassroots is through capacity building, which is described by Francis as 'a staple on the conflict-transformation menu' (2010: 15), and as a typical component on the international community's peace operation's 'formulaic' agenda (Mac Ginty 2009: 694). The goals of capacity building are to build the individual skills deemed necessary for instilling professionalism in civil societies (Sterland 2006: 1), with the aim of strengthening civil society to enhance peace building (Schenning & van der Haar 2006: 59). Capacity building tends to take place through workshops and training, as was overwhelmingly the case in Kosovo (Sterland 2006; Bekaj 2008), where the need for capacity building has been identified as greater in minority communities (USAID 2008: 20).

Criticism of capacity building in Kosovo has been that whilst a high volume of workshops have taken place, there were an insufficient number of long-term activities to sustain capacity development (Sterland 2006: 30). Critics of capacity building from within Kosovo have identified it as another form of 'social engineering' by the international community (Ibid.: 40). In other contexts, capacity building has been criticized as a 'starting from scratch approach to civil society' (Richmond & Franks 2008: 194), which overlooks the inherent capacity that already exists. Lange argues that the term capacity building is unclear in that it is sometimes 'a means to an end', and in other cases 'an end in itself'; and points out that capacity building of civil society organisations

requires engagement with explicitly political issues, and therefore pertains a deep understanding of the wider (conflict) context (Lange 2006: 167).

Grassroots peace building adding up to peace

The role that activities at the grassroots can play in affecting a wider process of change in a society emerging from war is a debated theme in peace building. The success of grassroots efforts to bring forth peace has been highlighted in a number of settings around the world. According to Lederach,

One could argue that virtually all of the recent transitions towards peace – such as those in El Salvador and Ethiopia, as well as the earlier one in the Philippines – were driven largely by the pressure for change that was bubbling up from the grassroots (Lederach, 1997: 52).

Barnes agrees, stating that,

While it is rare for grassroots efforts to transform wider systems of conflict and war, it is also not possible for these wider systems to be transformed without stimulating changes at the community level (Barnes 2005: 22).

Gawerc stresses that without intensive grassroots efforts and a strong foundation built for civil society, negotiations at the official level will not be able to bring either peace or justice. She writes, ‘The literature makes it clear that solutions must be adopted by local actors and it cannot be forced from above or imposed by the outside’ (2006: 441). Curle, at the age of eighty-five, reflecting on a lifetime’s work in the peace field explained that he had come to perceive peace as something that depends upon ‘the social and spiritual development of a mass of people’ (2002: 307).

At the level of grassroots peace building, certain tools have been developed which assist practitioners to evaluate more concretely how efforts to address change at the micro level add up to peace on a larger scale, whilst these have emerged with an awareness of the inherent challenges intrinsic to the perplexing question of how to measure peace. Lederach, Neufeld, and Culbertson propose a model entitled the ‘Four Dimensions of Conflict’ (2007: 18), alongside tools for assessing ‘Theories of Change’, through which analysis can be carried out on how conflict transformation efforts cut across levels in peace building. The four dimensions of conflict proposed are: Personal; Relational; Structural; and Cultural. The ‘Personal Dimension’ concerns how conflict changes individuals personally, emotionally and spiritually; the ‘Relational Dimension’ relates to those who have *direct contact* with one another, and concerns communication - the creation of stereotypes and the reduction of trust; the ‘Structural Dimension’ is the way in which conflict impacts on systems and concerns how relationships are *organised*, from families to society as a whole; and finally, the ‘Cultural Dimension’ sees conflict affecting deep seated cultural changes such as the norms which guide patterns of behaviour between groups in society (elders, youth, women and men). These four dimensions are interrelated, while as the authors explain, many peace

building endeavours at the grassroots focus their attention on the personal and interpersonal/community levels on the assumption that creating change at these levels will lead to changes at the structural and cultural levels.

The Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) Project established by CDA has also sought to examine in detail how small-scale interventions impact on peace at a broader level, through the notion of ‘peace writ-large’ - a term used to describe peace on a macro-scale. CDA suggest five criteria, which may increase the potential for grassroots peace programmes to have a broader impact. According to CDA, firstly, the effort should involve the continuous engagement of participants over time; requiring that their involvement is not one-off and is sustained in the face of difficulty including threats and pressure to discontinue. Secondly, the effort should have a linking dynamic, meaning that it should links upwards (bring influential figures from the political process to support new alternative leaders), or downwards (to bring in larger numbers of people and build public support at the grassroots level). This can be summed up as linking key people to more people or more people to key people (CDA 2009). Thirdly, the effort must address the root causes of the conflict and seek to finds solutions to key problems *driving* the conflict. Fourthly, effort should seek to create institutional solutions, and not revolve only around ephemeral personal relationships or ad hoc initiatives. Finally, the effort should cause people to respond differently in relation to conflict. For example, it should increase the ability of individuals to resist manipulation or to undertake proactive efforts; which encompasses an increased ability to analyse, manage and respond to conflict, or changed values and attitudes (CDA 2009)¹⁸.

RPP also argue that programming that focuses on change at the Individual/Personal level, but that never links or translates into action at the Socio-Political level has no discernible effect on peace. Therefore the evidence suggests that a greater impact will be made on the broader peace if personal transformations are translated into actions at the Socio-Political level (CDA 2009).

An additional way in which activities focused on the micro, personal and interpersonal/community levels may generate a more wide-reaching change is through a process known as ‘scaling-up’ (Francis 2010; Lederach, Neufeld & Culbertson 2007) through which a successful project is either expanded in geographical scope from the local to the national or international level and thus replicated in new places; or through which a target audience is expanded to include a new or larger

¹⁸ For a comprehensive understanding of RPP through field reports and case studies see ‘Reflecting on Peace Practice’ CDA http://www.cdainc.com/cdawww/project_profile.php?pid=RPP&pname=Reflecting%20on%20Peace%20Practice

sphere of actors. Francis gives the example of one UK-based international NGO that is utilizing a scaling-up approach in their work. The NGO director of this organisation explains,

If you could make a visible difference in a village and could then extend that to 40 villages, you might begin to see similar results from similar efforts, which would confirm the connection between activities and hypothetical results – and would perhaps also represent a cumulative shift that might have a visible impact on the large-scale process (Francis 2010: 54).

Criticism of Grassroots Peace Building

Despite research into the potential for interventions at the grassroots to contribute to ‘peace writ large’, there continues to be concerns about the degree to which the plethora of small activities implemented globally are contributing to peace as a bigger picture. Fisher & Zimina (2009: 13) question whether the many small and disjointed efforts of peace builders add up to peace on a bigger scale; and warn against trusting that the bigger picture will look after itself.

A number of factors are identified as standing in the way of Peace Writ Large, although findings do not always concur. Fisher and Zimina (2008) argue that (contra to the view expounded earlier by RPP), programmes are too narrowly ‘focused on war and the drivers of war’ instead of addressing other major threats to survival and security. This view is contested by Chigas and Woodrow (2009: 48) who argue that ‘programme strategies are not sufficiently linked to the key driving factors of conflict’. Another shortcoming identified concerns the broadening of the concept and practice of peace building that has taken place, which has led to what has been described as ‘a loss of strategic rigor in practice’ amongst actors. Chigas and Woodrow explain,

For instance, if they are working on poverty, they are building peace. Youth work is building peace, because ‘youth are critical to peace’. People assume that, because all these issues are linked, their work contributes ipso facto to peace. Consequently, they think that they do not need to do anything differently, or to think rigorously about what Peace Writ Large means in their context (Chigas and Woodrow 2009: 48).

Chigas and Woodrow argue the need to place a greater emphasis on theories of change in peace programming (see also Shapiro 2006). Weakness amongst international NGOs is identified as another problem undermining peace building at this level, whereby Fisher & Zimina (2009: 27) describe international organisations as:

Ineffective as peacebuilders, and poor partners for their local colleagues who face the heat of often violent and protracted oppression and conflict. In the face of the unjust world order, their banners of ‘sustainable peace’ may amount to little more than a delusion. Those ‘on the frontline’ might even consider them fraudulent.

Terms and how they are understood

Civil Society and the Grassroots

In the introduction I provided a brief analysis of the term civil society, as notions of civil society underpin much contemporary research into peace building at the grassroots. However, the term civil society is one that is ill-defined, and one which in Kosovo has largely come to mean NGOs; a phenomenon which reflects a global trend (Paffenholz & Spurk 2006).

The roots of civil society lie in a much wider understanding of the term however, and can be traced back to Aristotle, along with the 17th century writer John Locke (Paffenholz & Spurk 2006: 4), whereby Aristotle defined 'civil' as meaning 'of the state'; thus 'civil society' referred to one's collective interactions with the state as a citizen of the polis. Locke defined a space that was 'un-political'; 'a body in its own right' and 'separate from the state', and named it civil society. In the broadest sense, civil society is a third sector, in addition to the public and private, where people can get together around shared values, norms and interests. With the transition that took place following the end of the Cold War, the positive role that civil society had to play in overthrowing authoritarian regimes was championed, and thus subsequently civil society came to be seen as something of a panacea for the resolution for all the problems of the Former Yugoslav (Paul Stubbs 2007). However not everybody agrees on who should and shouldn't be included within civil society. For example, some scholars and actors include the media as a member of civil society, whilst others object to this because the media is usually run as a 'for-profit business'. The fact that armed groups may under such a broad definition fall into the category of civil society has led others to coin the term 'uncivil society' (Barnes 2005). Pouligny criticizes the term civil society for the way in which it encourages homogenization, thus concealing the distinction made between indigenous and outside NGOs, whilst also reducing the richness and diversity of civil society by creating a uniform understanding (2005).

A clear overlap exists between usage of the term civil society and the word grassroots, whereby according to Horton's definition, grassroots associations are described as 'locally-based, volunteer-run, non-profit, common-interest groups' (Smith 1997: 189). With the formalization of civil society activities and structures that has taken place in the past twenty years - rendering local civil society 'institutionalized' - the grassroots could almost be conceptualized as an 'untamed' civil society.

Criticisms of the civil society paradigm are manifold and include the complaint that the civil society paradigm fails to recognise the essentially political nature of civil society. According to Donais (2009: 14):

The standard view of civil society as a universal force for good is often challenged by the politicized realities of conflict situations, in which civil society organizations are subject to the same sets of political dynamics, constraints, and incentives that affect local political elites.

Prendergast and Plumb argue that while civil society organizations can indeed make a positive contribution to peace building, they can also ‘reinforce negative, conflict-producing elements of the economic and social structure of a given state’ (Prendergast & Plumb 2002: 328). Further criticism of Civil Society concerns the way in which what began as an essentially indigenous, ‘self-originated’, phenomenon has been co-opted by Western agendas (Pouligny 2005)

Justice

According to some, peace and justice are not exclusive alternatives, as the passage from negative to positive peace runs through justice (Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse 2011: 250-251). For Montville, justice is the ‘most fundamental element of peace’ as justice ‘implies order and morality...the basic rules governing right and wrong behaviour’ (2001:129). Justice is seen as a way of addressing the underlying causes of violent conflict, thus making it less likely to reoccur in the future (Lederach 1997). At the same time justice can be problematic, as characteristic of violent conflict is the fact that all parties believe that they are victims of injustice, and that therefore justice is on their side (Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse 2011:12). Thus, as Kriesberg notes, justice also has the potential to become the basis for renewed conflict when it involves punishing or discriminating against previously oppressive factions (Kriesberg in Bar-Siman-Tov 2004: 84).

It is helpful in the context of Kosovo to examine justice in relation to peace from two different (though inter-connected) perspectives. The first is from the perspective of ‘internalized injustice’; meaning the *sense* of injustice carried internally by those affected by the conflict, for example individuals who lost family members in the war. The second perspective concerns ‘external justice measures’: for example, war crimes trials, truth commissions, international tribunals and reparations (which often come under the heading of ‘transitional justice’), alongside individual acts of revenge¹⁹ or fact-finding measures²⁰. External justice measures seek to redress the internalized injustice felt by conflict parties through concrete actions. In Kosovo, transitional justice efforts have been heavily criticized. Accusations include that justice has been sacrificed for the sake of stability (KIPRED 2009: 17-18); and that both the Serbian government and UNMIK failed to

¹⁹ For example in Kosovo, following the war, revenge attacks were carried out by Albanians, against Serbs and other minorities as retribution for the events of the conflict and war. See Chapter 3.

²⁰ For example, in Kosovo ‘The Kosovo Memory book’ has, as well as seeking to serve as a monument to the victims of war crimes, aimed to provide evidence for each war crime and victim, through the correlation of factual materials. See HLC http://www.kosovomemorybook.org/?page_id=29&lang=de

address a culture of impunity in Kosovo due to a lack of resources allocated for such measures (Amnesty International 2009). Observed also has been the lack of interest amongst former KLA and Serbian officials in addressing the needs of the relatives of victims (Amnesty International 2009: 57). Serbia's political elite is accused of refusing to 'identify, admit to, or take responsibility for crimes committed in the past'; whilst governments on both sides are described as focusing more on their desire to preserve or strengthen power, than confronting the needs and wellbeing of the population (Women's Peace Coalition 2007: 5). Though the mechanisms of transitional justice are highly relevant to deepening peace in Kosovo, I address this issue here and in this thesis as a whole, primarily from the perspective of how an 'internalized sense of injustice' (i.e. how people experience justice and injustice) impacts peace and peace building, rather than examining the mechanisms of transitional justice, as this research focuses on grassroots attitudes and behaviours, over how peace is brought about through institutional efforts and change.

A strong sense of internalized injustice is debilitating for individuals, and serves as a barrier to positive peace. For example, the issue of missing persons has left a significant number of people in Kosovo unaware of the fate of their close relatives. As a recent report emphasizes, the anxiety and distress caused by this has left many unable to rebuild their lives, either emotionally or practically, and one relative is cited as saying, 'My mother has cried absolutely every day for the last 10 years' (Amnesty 2009: 55). The unresolved issue of missing persons further antagonizes negative feelings about the other, and inhibits individuals from letting go of bitter feelings about the past. ICRC explain:

Mourning is not just an emotional healing process, it is also a process of social reconstruction (...) reconciliation starts by giving those most in need, the most sorely tested, the possibility and the means of burying their dead with dignity, of paying homage to them, of giving them the status and dignity of which they were deprived by war and political violence (2002: 23).

As Crettol & Rosa explain, when the bodies of those killed or disappeared remain missing and families are prevented from establishing the circumstances of their deaths and organising funerals, they are often left with a heavy burden of grief and unable to complete their mourning process (Crettol & Rosa 2006: 362). Vamik Volkan suggests that such individuals risk become 'perennial mourners' (2006), who transfer unfinished psychological tasks onto future generations as has been observed in relation to the Holocaust (Volkan, Ast, Greer 2002), and the Palestine-Israel conflict (Dan Bar-On & Fatma Kassem 2004); though this remains a little explored theme in Kosovo.

Aside from the relatives of missing persons, are those simply left in vulnerable economic positions or grief-stricken by the loss of family members, property and livelihoods, who also internalise a

strong sense of injustice. Dealing with such issues ‘so that the future is not continually hampered by an unresolved past’ (Hayner 2003: 254) through external justice measures is crucial to positive peace, whereby constructive dealing with the past is an indispensable prerequisite for accompanying peace building processes (Franović 2008: 7). However, it has been noted by some scholars that a sense of justice for everyone following violent conflict is often unattainable (Rigby 2001:11) and Wink observes that justice is seldom ‘completely done’ (1998: 22).

A sense of injustice is linked to a very real need for *acknowledgement* of wrong doing amongst those held to be responsible for the crimes; a move which is described by some as ‘symbolic justice’ (Estrada-Hollenbeck 2001: 66). According to Govier, acknowledgement offers soothing and relief to victims (2002: 86), whilst Desmond Tutu perceives acknowledgement as a key factor in preventing further violence, as illustrated by a story he recounts whereby a victim is about to commit revenge when the perpetrator admits wrongdoing,

His admission restores her dignity and her identity. Her experience is confirmed as real and not illusory, and her sense of self is affirmed (Tutu 2002: 66).

Lederach emphasises that it is one thing to know, yet a very different social phenomenon to acknowledge. Through hearing one another’s stories experience and feelings are validated and ‘this represents the first step toward restoration of the person and the relationship’ (1997: 26). Linked to acknowledgement is apology. According to Rothberg,

‘Where the causes of civil strife remain in dispute, with blaming a preponderant form of discourse, then the delivery of apology from a dominant side to an aggrieved minority (...) can calm long roiled waters and greatly assist in effecting a successful transition’ (2006: 33).

The need for acknowledgement and apology has been recognised in Kosovo, where Adem Demaçi has called for an apology from the government of Serbia to Kosovo and its people, ‘in the name of Serbia and history of the Serb rule’ (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia – HLC 2005: 249).

Reconciliation

Peace and justice are often interpreted as inextricable from the concept of reconciliation, with justice being perceived as a ‘doorway’ to reconciliation. According to Bloomfield, however, reconciliation’s fundamental problem is that ‘no-one agrees how to define it or do it’ (2006: 4). Galtung concurs, describing reconciliation as having ‘deep psychological, sociological, theological, philosophical, and profoundly human roots’ whilst concluding that, like Bloomfield, ‘nobody really knows how to successfully achieve it’ (2001: 4). Like justice, reconciliation is viewed as crucial in our pursuit of positive peace, and to the prevention of a reoccurrence of violence. According to Rothstein, failure to affect reconciliation ‘will guarantee a very cold peace and perhaps a return to

violence' (Rothstein 1999: 238). Reconciliation has also been interpreted as 'the ultimate goal' of conflict resolution (Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse 2011: 246). The Human Rights activist, Sonja Biserko, has described reconciliation in the Former Yugoslavia as:

An indispensable process to give society a new life and a new hope. It presupposes that the two parties to the conflict can find a basis on which they can live together (Biserko 2003: no page number).

Francis suggests that reconciliation is an ambition that 'should be kept alive' if a society is to move away from the likelihood of new violence in years to come (Francis 2010: 34).

Reconciliation is seen as both a personal (i.e. psychological), and a political pursuit. When it comes to the personal, the focus is often on building and restoring relationships. According to Lederach, 'reconciliation is first and last about people and their relationships' (2001: 842), and for Bar-Tal & Bennink 'the essence of reconciliation is the construction of lasting peaceful relations' (2004: 37). This sentiment is echoed throughout the literature on this theme (see e.g. Kriesberg 2001: 48). Reconciliation denoting a political process, oft referred to as 'national reconciliation', involves forging new political relationships and new ways of talking about the past in the public sphere. For example, in the context of South Africa, Hayner argues that national reconciliation has been 'thoroughly won' because today almost no one would publicly deny that abuse took place on a huge scale under Apartheid or boast about its benefits (Hayner, 2001: 161). Reconciliation is also widely acknowledged for being both a *process* and an *outcome* (Bloomfield 2006). As a process, Lederach has described it as one 'aimed at building and healing' (Lederach 2001: 841); and according to Bar-Tal & Bennink reconciliation as an end state consists of mutual recognition and acceptance, invested interests and goals in developing peaceful relations, mutual trust, positive attitudes, as well as sensitivity and consideration for the other party's needs and interests (2004: 15). When it comes to an act of reconciliation between former enemies, Hayner suggests that it should go beyond 'an unspoken agreement to never bring up the past' (2001: 161).

In proposing four models for reconciliation, Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse (2011: 247) suggest that reconciliation should be understood beyond the sphere of relationships, and that it concerns the acceptance of what has taken place in the past: the notion of *reconciling oneself with one's fate* - an interpretation of reconciliation with concurs with Rigby's (2006: 5). Reconciliation can be seen also as the correlation of stories in order that they are not completely irreconcilable (often the role of truth commissions); and is described also as 'bridging diversity', which relates to Boulding's definition of 'cultures of peace' described above.

Assefa suggests that for reconciliation to take place a number of core elements are needed. These include: honest acknowledgement of the harm/injury each party has inflicted on the other; sincere regrets and remorse for the injury done; readiness to apologize for one's role in inflicting injury; readiness of the conflicting parties to let go of anger and bitterness caused by the conflict; commitment by the offender not to repeat the injury; and sincere efforts to redress past grievances that caused the conflict and compensate the damage caused to the extent possible (Assefa 2001: 340).

Criticism concerning reconciliation stems from two key objections. The first is that it is a rather idealistic or unrealistic goal considering that reconciliation is being urged upon former enemies, victims and perpetrators of Human Rights abuses, and those who have forged a self-image based on historical and state-sanctioned relations (Dwyer 2003: 82). The second criticism, expressed particularly amongst victims, concerns the perceived *outcomes* of reconciliation, namely that through reconciliation victims will be forced to forgive the perpetrators, whilst foregoing justice. When informed of a forthcoming reconciliation process, victims often jump to the conclusion, and on good grounds, that this will mean they must give up some claims, or accept imperfect justice, or be forced unilaterally to forgive those who made them suffer (Bloomfield 2006: 7).

Hayner emphasises that though reconciliation is a worthy goal, 'it cannot be imposed by decree on society' (2001: 161). Likewise Asseffa explains that in reconciliation 'the forces for change are primarily internal and voluntary' and that the essence of reconciliation is that it is 'a *voluntary* initiative of the conflicting parties to acknowledge their responsibility and guilt' (2001: 341). Perhaps relevant to note here is Clark's observation that,

Full reconciliation - in the sense of establishing friendly relationships between Kosovo's Serb and Albanian communities - is not on the agenda. However, what might be achievable in time is coexistence with guarantees of human rights, including the rights to security and participation (2002: 2).

In Kosovo the eminent Albanian Catholic priest, Don Lush Gjergji²¹ has emphasized that in order for individuals to consider dealing with the bigger picture of peace and reconciliation, it is first necessary to address individual needs, 'you can't ask people to reconcile when their personal problems are too terrible' (Reychler & Stellamans 2004: 40). Noteworthy is that Don Lush has been one of the Kosovo Albanian voices for forgiveness.

²¹ Don Lush Gjergji is an Albanian Catholic priest and prominent figure in Kosovo's civil society who helped lead the campaign to end blood feuds during the 1990s. He is president of the Mother Theresa Association in Kosovo.

Despite the confusion and controversy surrounding this term, reconciliation remains immensely popular amongst members of the international community and policy makers engaged with peace building. According to Bloomfield, ‘donors support it’, ‘IGOs demand it’, and ‘INGOs increasingly incorporate it into their portfolios’, whilst new organisations are formed with the explicit goal of promoting and implementing aspects of reconciliation (Bloomfield 2006: 5). The UK for example is reported as putting support for projects aimed at ‘reconciliation, justice and healing’ ahead of those financing socio-economic and political frameworks in what they define as peace building programming²² (Smith 2004: 42).

Insufficient literature has sought to examine how efforts aimed at reconciliation play-out in NGO programming at the grassroots in real terms. Reconciliation remains over-theorized and a highly promoted goal in peace building (with Kosovo being no exception), whilst less is known about how those at the grassroots experience engaging in reconciliation efforts, through grassroots peace building.

Coexistence

Some critics of reconciliation favour instead the concept of coexistence. According to Bloomfield, coexistence is a ‘less loaded term’ and covers a wide range of possibilities from ‘grudging acceptance of the need to exist in the same space’, to a ‘more positive and complex set of activities’ (Bloomfield 2006: 13). Clark (2002: 30) stresses the importance that, although it can be ‘hard not to hate ... there are minimum [human rights] standards below which one should not sink’.

Coexistence has been examined by a number of scholars from the perspective of sliding scales, whereby ‘levels’, ‘degrees’ or ‘intensities’ of coexistence are identified. At one end of the spectrum is a situation whereby people simply live together without causing harm (Kriesberg 2002: 48), and at the other are communities that coexist with ‘a sense of mutual tolerance or even respect’ (ibid. see also Crocker 2000: 7). Deeper than this is a situation whereby ‘all parties play a role in deliberations concerning the past, present and future of their country’ (Crocker 2000: 7). Rigby ties coexistence to reconciliation by suggesting that ‘surface reconciliation’ denotes a level of coexistence whereby people live separate lives, with ‘minimal social interaction’. ‘Deep reconciliation’ is coexistence whereby people from different communities live ‘with and amongst each other’ and the nature of their interaction is ‘rich and multi-textured’ (Rigby 2006: 13). To illustrate this, Rigby provides a typology of Levels of Coexistence. See Figure 6.

²² This data is taken from 1997-2001, with more recent comparable data unavailable.

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Figure 6: Levels of Reconciliation (Rigby 2006)

Outsiders: roles and motivations, integrity and coherence

Insiders and Outsiders

The relationship between insiders (i.e. people who originate from and live within a country) and outsiders (those who arrive from outside) in peace building is at the heart of much criticism and debate within this field, where it is widely felt that successful peace building efforts must be forged through effective relationships between insiders and outsiders (CDA 2004). Insiders are described as those whose lives are *directly affected* by the conflict, whilst outsiders are those who choose to get involved and have the option of walking away from the situation (Barnes 2006: 95). Insiders are vulnerable to the conflict, usually live in the area, experience the conflict, and suffer its consequences personally, whilst outsiders (though they may be intensely engaged) have little to lose personally (CDA 2004: 22). CDA argue that in practice there are no ‘pure insiders or outsiders’, but rather degrees of ‘insiderness’ and ‘outsiderness’ which means that ‘someone is more or less of an insider/outsider than someone else’ (CDA 2004: 22). CDA urges practitioners therefore to develop an awareness of how they are perceived (Ibid.).

Insiders are described as bringing clear motivation, passion, and commitment to the cause (because they experience the costs of the conflict). They also possess in-depth knowledge of the context, the

conflict, and its dynamics, and an understanding of the parties involved (CDA 2004: 23). Francis emphasizes that insiders achieve conflict transformation, first and foremost, and that only the people who live in a place can build peace there. Therefore, 'their primary role should be honoured' (Francis 2010: 9). Likewise, according to Barnes, whilst consultation between insiders and outsiders is crucial in order to ensure a balanced and informed perspective, 'the initiative and definition of needs must come from insiders' (Barnes 2006: 96).

CDA identifies a number of qualities outsiders can bring to a context, such as: power; resources; certain kinds of influence; and access to a wider stage (CDA 2004: 23). A number of practitioner-scholars have espoused certain personal qualities that they suggest outsiders should embody in their bid to support insiders in conflict transformation. For example, Curle suggests that amongst those coming to a context from outside, what insiders primarily need are people they feel are 'wise, well informed, and helpful':

Somebody who doesn't show off, somebody who will understand the sort of society, the sort of situation they are in and accepts it. But they also want someone who can suggest new things but not in an aggressive or know-it-all fashion (Curle 2002: 309-310).

Likewise, Assefa reminds peacebuilders that,

We have to be very humble about what it is that we are bringing as outsiders into the situation that the people there cannot do on their own (2002: 288).

According to Pouligny (2005: 508) one needs to be 'modest, flexible, patient and unobtrusive' and she laments the fact that this constitutes 'almost the opposite of what informs most of the current practices'.

One central problem identified within the literature on this theme is that international actors perceive the contexts to which they are deployed as 'blank slates upon which a new social, economic, and political order can be written' (Moore 2000: 14). According to Pouligny,

Outsiders behave as though the date of their arrival was year zero for the country, as though nothing had happened before them, and therefore fail to identify locally existing resources (2005: 502).

Katarina Kruhonja reflects upon the outsiders who have been most supportive within the peace building efforts of her own peace organisation in Croatia and describes them as follows:

People who did not come with ready-made solutions but who were able to explore our needs and to listen carefully. They used the right questions, which made us trust our own knowledge, our experience, our analysis, and inspired us to find our own possible solutions to the problem (Ingelstam 2001: 24).

‘Be the change’

In examining peace from the individual/personal perspective, a number of scholars and practitioners have insisted that peace must be understood also in relation to the very individuals who seek to bring it about, and concerns their own process of inner transformation also. Miall (2004: 17) suggests that, ‘The conflict transformer must also take responsibility for transforming him - or herself in the process’. Kraybill writes,

How can we assist the healing of a broken world when we ourselves are far from healed? The question has followed me across twenty-five years of peacebuilding work. I first saw it as a problem in others (...) But time drove me to see it as my problem’ (2009: 2).

Kraybill and Miall, along with others from the field of peace research, including Curle (1990), Assefa (2002), and Fisher (2004) have made explicit that without affecting some sort of change on an inner level as individuals, greater change in the world will not take place. As Curle explains,

If we are inwardly turbulent and ill at ease, we cannot work for peace or be actively involved with people who are behaving in an unpeaceful way (Curle 1990: 17).

Fundamental to understanding this approach to peace are the principles expounded within the field of ‘engaged Buddhism’, and in particular in the writing and actions of Buddhist teacher and social activist Thich Nhat Hahn, who coined the term. ‘Engaged Buddhism’ is a contemporary form of Buddhism which seeks to address economic, political, social, and ecological problems of society through non violence (King 2009: 1). It is forged on a number of guiding principles, drawing from traditional Buddhist teachings. Firstly, is the notion that in order to make peace, the peacemaker needs to ‘be peace’ (Hanh 2004), which means that the peacemaker should ‘intentionally cultivate inner peace and then go about making peace in a peaceful manner—without anger or antagonism’ (King 2009: 176). Secondly, engaged Buddhism draws from the Buddhist principle of “no-self” (*anatta* or *anatman*), which is the idea that an individual human “self” does not exist and that separation between “self” and “other” is illusionary. This is guided by the Buddhist principle that nothing exists on its own, and that everything is dependent on other things (Der-lan Yeh 2006). Engaged Buddhism therefore challenges conventional understandings of charity, as for Buddhist there is no separation between the ‘givers’ and ‘receiver’, in what for Buddhists is an interconnected world:

According to the Buddha's teaching of Dependent Origination, everything, including the psychophysical compound that we call individual, exists only in relation to other beings and things and undergoes constant changes responding and reacting to them (Der-lan Yeh 2006: 91).

Thich Nhat Hanh illustrates this principle in action by sharing his experiences of working on a sponsorship programme for Vietnamese orphans. He writes,

I look into the eyes of the child in the photograph, and look at the child's expression and features closely. (...) I no longer see an "I" who translates the sheets to help each child, I no longer see a child who receives love and help. The child and I are one: no one pities; no one asks for help; no one helps. There is no task, no social work to be done, no compassion, no special wisdom (1987: 57).

Galtung emphasizes that Buddhism has been an increasingly important influence on his work (1990b: 280), and Buddhism profoundly influenced Adam Curle also (Woodhouse 2006).

Alongside the principles of engaged Buddhism and fundamental to understanding peace building from this perspective, are the writings and actions of Gandhi, whereby Gandhi's commitment to *ahimsa* was a way of life, not merely a philosophy. *Ahimsa* extended to not even harbouring an uncharitable thought about another person. As is observed in Buddhism, according to Gandhi how an individual conducts himself determines how peaceful a society will be, and Gandhi explained that 'the best propaganda is not pamphleteering', but instead 'for each of us to try to live the life we would have the world to live' (Gandhi 1924: 106). Gandhi stated,

One drowning man will never save another. [If] slaves ourselves, it would be a mere pretension to think of freeing others (Gandhi 1909a in CW 1999).

Gandhi's commitment to the upliftment of society through non-violence extended to the principle that the wealthier classes should dedicate themselves to its emancipation, without being driven by materialistic or egotistical goals. Gandhi developed the principle of *trusteeship*, through which he suggested that those who earned more than they needed to fulfil their 'legitimate needs' should give the remainder to benefit society. He himself took up 'voluntary poverty', for as he saw it,

...If I had to serve the people in whose midst my life was cast and of whose difficulties I was witness from day to day, I must discard all wealth, all possessions (Gandhi 1931 in Johnson 2006: 153).

Gandhi also envisioned a Peace Brigade: a band of citizens who could take voluntary responsibility for their communities and pre-empt or resolve conflicts through nonviolent means, whilst removing the need for the police or even the military (Gandhi 1938 in CW 1999: 244-255).

Motivation and Stance

Ramsbotham & Woodhouse (1996: 226) proposes twelve principles for humanitarian intervention and two of these are of particular relevance here. The first concerns the principle of mutuality and states that: ‘the intervention should be conducted in terms understood and accepted within the affected region and in such a way as to preserve autonomy of those working locally to resolve conflict and alleviate suffering’. The second concerns reflexivity, and states that: ‘Interveners’ interests, motives and previous behaviour should be compatible with the professed purpose of their intervention’.

When examining peace from the perspective of the individuals who are seeking to bring it about, questions are raised concerning *motivation*, particularly in relation to *altruism*, and *impartiality*. For Gandhi, altruism was the antithesis to selfishness, and his commitment to altruism was forged on his quest for *Satya* and his belief that ‘a selfish basis would not serve the purpose of taking a man higher and higher along the paths of evolution’ (Gandhi 1931 in CW 1999). For Gandhi, altruism was tied to renunciation (carrying out action with detachment and without thought of reaping benefits); whilst at the same time, he came to feel that there was no such thing as ‘pure altruism’, and that there was self-interest in all altruism but that ‘self-interest which includes the interest of others is called altruism’ (Gandhi 1929 in CW 1999). Yet, for those approaching this theme from the perspective of Engaged Buddhism and other Eastern traditions, altruism might be seen as an anathema, because it discriminates between ‘self’ and ‘other’. Thich Nhat Hanh writes,

We rejoice when we see others happy, but we rejoice in our own wellbeing as well. How can we feel joy for another person when we do not feel joy for ourselves? Joy is for everyone (Hanh 1999: 174).

In his book, *The Selfish Altruist* Tony Vaux provides a critique of altruism from the perspective of humanitarian interventions, and argues that altruism is a very difficult sentiment to sustain:

Our natural tendency is to think of ourselves first and to bring our own perceptions, prejudices and principles into our expression of concern for other people (2001: 1).

Vaux believes that NGOs engaged in humanitarian efforts often fall victim to diverse influences, including prejudice, personal ambitions and institutional rivalries (2001). Therefore Vaux proposes

that we strive for ‘pure’ motivations; explaining that the issue is about ‘minimizing’ the self and increasing awareness of the ‘other’ (2001). Kraybill, however, argues that there is no such thing as a person with *pure motivations* in peace building, insisting that all of us have mixed motivations, including: desire for recognition; power; or ‘to be liked’. Like Vaux, Kraybill warns against those for whom ‘selfish motives outweigh commitment to others’ and advocates ‘Full awareness of our own mix of motives’ in order that we are more likely to be honest with those around us and effectively keep our selfish motives in check (Kraybill 2009: 113).

De Jong (2011) identifies a ‘false binary’ between altruism and selfishness, arguing that the two are not mutually exclusive. She suggests that rather than an act of helping being *polluted* by egoism, it is conceivable that an action can be ‘*simultaneously* labelled *egotistical* and *altruistic* without posing a contradiction’. For example, the actions of an NGO worker can be altruistic in their effect while at the same time be partly motivated by egoistic concerns or vice versa. For de Jong this does not undermine their value (2011: 27). However, Seglow argues that an altruistic act must further another person’s good *at the same costs to oneself* - or at least that an individual must be willing to bear such a cost if required (2004: 146 emphasis mine). This viewpoint is concurrent with Gandhi’s. Much of the altruism conundrum centres on a conflict between whether the ultimate goal of an act is to advance one’s *own* welfare, or to help *the other*; and whether having a vested interest undermines the act itself (if in fact it is possible to distinguish between self-less and egotistical goals). Batson & Shaw argue therefore that to solve the altruism puzzle we must seek to determine which is the ‘ultimate goal’ - benefit to self or other (1991).

Linked to altruism are notions of impartiality, which is tied to the concept of neutrality. Impartiality and neutrality are often used interchangeably, however here I rely on Weller’s definitions (1997), in which impartiality essentially relates to *action*, and neutrality to *attitude*. This reflects also the approach of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who explain that impartiality strives to relieve the suffering of individuals, ‘being guided solely by their needs’; whilst neutrality engenders not taking sides in hostilities or engaging in ‘controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature’ (ICRC 2011: 35).

However, for Kruhonja, an impartial approach amongst external actors has negative connotations for local people caught up in conflict, as it can signify a lack of involvement:

To be impartial means (...) to keep a certain distance to be able to be more objective. I believe in compassion and inclusion. This means: I am close to you, I feel with you, but I do not

exclude others because of that. We are all part of one another. Such an attitude is not less but more effective in order to better understand the situation (Ingelstam 2001: 25).

Kruhonja's analysis fits with Thich Nhat Hanh's interpretation of impartiality, in which he emphasizes that,

In a conflict, even though we are deeply concerned, we remain impartial, able to love and understand both sides. We shed all discrimination and prejudice and remove all boundaries between ourselves and others. As long as we see ourselves as the one who loves and the other as the one who is loved, as long as we value ourselves more than others or see ourselves as different from others, we do not have true equanimity. We have to put ourselves "into the other person's skin" (2007: 9).

Likewise Curle has spoken passionately about the need in peace building to not feel 'separate from people you are working with or for' (2002: 310).

Neutrality is a term that has been widely criticized in relation to humanitarian interventions. For example the ICRC, by following its policy of neutrality towards Nigeria in the 1970s is seen to have played a role in starving the people of Biafra. In the words of Bernard Kouchner 'By keeping silent, we doctors were accomplices in the systematic massacre of a population' (Koucher 1986, cited in Allen & Styan 2000: 830). Wallace argues vehemently against notions of neutrality amongst those intervening in conflict, suggesting that, 'The notion that one is strictly adherent to neutrality is a sham. It's just simply not true, not even useful.' Wallace argues instead that there is a need to know 'where one stands' (Wallace 2003).

The United Nations, along with the OSCE and EU emphasized their position to Kosovo as one of neutrality (particularly in relation to final status), whilst the Security Council and UNMIK asserted from the outset that it was administering Kosovo impartially for the benefit of its people (See UNSC 1999: Resolution 1244). However, no analysis has taken place into how the attitudes and behaviours that stem from interpretations of neutrality and impartiality amongst external actors have influenced peace building in Kosovo at the grassroots.

Compassion, Empathy and Care

The journey through altruism and impartiality, inevitably leads to the themes of compassion, empathy, and care; both from the perspective of engaged Buddhism and Gandhi, and in relation to contemporary peace building critique.

Compassion plays a central role in engaged Buddhism, and the Dalai Lama has emphasised that the only proper motivation for social action is love and compassion, forged on ‘universal responsibility’ whilst emphasising also the lack of distinction to be made between ‘self’ and ‘other’ in this approach (Queen & King 1996: 306; 405). Thich Nhat Hanh emphasises that *ideas* about understanding and compassion are not enough and that ‘compassion must be *real* in our lives (...) must be seen and touched’ (1998: 5). In addressing peace builders engaged in the Palestine-Israel conflict, he states,

The Palestinians have suffered so much. And when the Israelis come and describe to us their suffering, we are able to see that they too have suffered. That kind of understanding is crucial. Once understanding and compassion are born in our heart, the poisons of anger, discrimination, hate and despair will be transformed (Hanh 2004: 101).

Thich Nhat Hanh argues that the only answer is to ‘remove the poison and to allow the insight and compassion in’ in order that people discover each other as human beings and not as Buddhists, Muslims, Jews; or as pro-American or pro-Arab, for example (2004: 101).

Compassion was central to Gandhi’s principle of *ahimsa*. Gandhi explained that there was courage in forgiving out of compassion, even when a person had inflicted extreme cruelty upon you, rather than responding with violence. Gandhi believed that every action should be motivated by compassion, and stated that there should be *more compassion* where there is more ‘weakness’, ‘helplessness’ and ‘dumbness’ (Gandhi 1921 in CW 1999).

Despite such sentiments, Tagesson warns against those of us who become involved in working for social change falling into the trap of wishing to see ourselves as ‘a Truly Good Person’, and becoming addicted to the sensation of feeling great about ourselves for being compassionate and caring about the world when nobody else does (2006: 51). According to Tagesson, we risk becoming dependent on the very things we wanted to get rid of, because we enjoy the sensation of ‘helping’ others too much. Tagesson relates this Chodron’s analysis that ‘when we identify ourselves as the helper, we see the other as helpless’ (Chodron 2001:77), which Tagesson argues occurs also when our compassion becomes coloured by pity (2006: 51).

Linked to compassion is empathy, a concept widely debated from a number of perspectives, particularly psychology and ethics. Little analysis of the term has taken place within the fields of conflict resolution (Broome 1993: 97), and it is often overlooked in peace literature (Richmond 2010: 684). Assefa suggests that empathy, which he describes as ‘understanding what it means to

be on the receiving end of the pain' is crucial in gaining trust and credibility within the communities in which we seek to build peace (Assefa 2002: 286).

A common interpretation of empathy is that it centres on the act of putting oneself 'in another's shoes'. This has fuelled debates surrounding the accuracy of inferring another's thoughts, and as to whether empathy can transcend the limits imposed by culture and knowledge, where it is felt that *What has not been experienced cannot be perceived* (Howell 1986: 108 emphasis original).

Broome argues, in his analysis of 'relational empathy' from the perspective of conflict resolution, that provided two individuals with similar worldviews are in communication with one another, they may engage in communication 'on the basis of projection' (i.e. one may infer what the other is thinking based on their own experiences). However, those who have different viewpoints and experiences will lack significant overlapping of interpretations and understandings (1993: 105).

Those approaching empathy from the perspective of feminist ethics within the paradigm of the 'ethics of care', as proposed by Noddings (1993), provide a different analysis of the term.

Noddings (1993:30) argues against standard interpretations of empathy, as given, for example, by the *The Oxford Universal Dictionary*, which defines empathy as 'the power of projecting one's personality into, and so fully understanding, the object of contemplation'. She insists instead that empathy, rather than being an act of 'projection', is one of 'reception'. Noddings explains that she does not put herself in the others' shoes (asking 'how would I feel in such a situation?') and instead sets aside her temptation to analyse and to plan. Rather she 'receives' the other into herself, in order to 'see and feel with the other', and thus becomes 'a duality'.

From the perspective of peace building Francis emphasizes that the discourses of both nonviolence and conflict resolution are founded on 'respect and care'. Francis argues the need for making these values explicit,

not only because they are at the heart of conflict transformation, but also because they are in sharp contrast to the values expressed in much that goes on in the wider world in which we all operate, and at odds with some of the things done in the name of 'peacemaking' and 'peacebuilding' (Francis 2010: 11).

Partnerships, Funding and the 'Projectisation' of Peace

Intrinsic to the fabric of peace building at the grassroots are partnerships forged between international organisations and local ones. Such partnerships (described often as 'North-South') potentially enable the more efficient use of resources; increase sustainability; and improve

beneficiary participation in development activities (Lister 1999: 3). Furthermore, it is thought that partnership produce results that partners could not obtain without collaboration (Brown 1990). According to Richmond, without such partnerships, ‘peace will take a very long time to take root, if it ever does’ (2005: 439). CDA describes positive partnerships as ones where insiders and outsiders work as a team and in which both perspectives are valued: ‘The relationship should be horizontal and based on mutual consultation’, which manifests as ‘equal influence on decisions’, and involves joint processes for setting strategies, defining goals, and evaluating results (whilst the initiative and definition of needs must come predominantly from *insiders*). Partners are advised to ‘take the time to understand and define where their missions diverge’, whilst acknowledging that they will have ‘differences as well as a common vision’ (CDA 2004: 25).

However, asymmetries within insider-outsider partnerships are consistently identified within literature examining the reality of these partnerships on the ground (Francis 2002; Pouligny 2005). The concern centres on the fact that international organisations essentially ‘hold the purse strings’, thus relationships between insiders and outsiders are ‘characterized by patronage’ (Pouligny 2005: 504). Pickard argues that,

A true partnership can never be said to exist, since an unequal power relationship inevitably prevails, at least on the question of funding (2010: 137).

In Kosovo, Sterland (2006: 18) identifies a trend whereby INGOs ‘artificially’ established local partners by localising branch offices thus creating ‘Hybrid LINGOs’ which were ‘totally dependent on single donors and lacking competent local staff, as parent INGOs maintained foreign workers in key management roles’. LLamazares & Levy 2003: 16) describe partnerships in Kosovo as ‘feel good term’ in reality applied to ‘nearly every possible permutation of relationship’ including local organisations operating ‘as complete pawns of an international patron.’

Richmond, argues that the notion that internationals want to empower local actors ‘looks flimsy’ and argues instead that such arrangements are essentially disempowering:

Peacebuilding looks more like an exercise of power over the weak rather than attempts to find locally rooted forms of emancipation, which reflect and also, more importantly, develop international standards (Richmond 2011: 17).

Fisher & Zimina question whether outsiders would potentially do less harm ‘if they stick to their technical expertise and do not try to transform situations they do not know from the inside out’ (2009: 20). In contrast, Donais argues that whilst a serious and sustained effort must be made to bridge the international – local divide in the name of sustainable peacebuilding, we should beware ‘naïve assumptions about locals knowing best’:

Rather, moving towards a new partnership between locals and internationals in peacebuilding situations must be based on the realistic conclusion that peacebuilding can only succeed with the sustained contributions and commitment of both internationals and locals. Finding ways to combine local and international resources in ways that maximize the long-term possibilities for sustainable peace remains one of the great challenges of contemporary peacebuilding (2009: 22).

In partnerships, it is argued that local organisations often rely upon their international counterparts to formulate and present funding proposal for joint work, making internationals the ones who are essentially accountable to the donors for the way the money is used (Francis 2010: 9 - 10). This can result in a situation whereby local partners become essentially 'client organisations' who find themselves 'adjusting their agendas to fit with those of their outside partners in order to sustain their own organisations' (ibid).

According to Pouligny, conflict settings also become saturated with international organisations that 'rush into the peacebuilding and democracy marketplace', in turn creating a mushrooming of local organisations who eagerly respond to the opportunities that arise from the corresponding arrival of funds (2005: 499); as has also been the case in Kosovo (Pula 2005: 7). Pouligny suggests that the programmes of these new organisations are often largely disconnected from the core issues faced by those who inhabit these regions and even more from their cultural references (2005). At the local level, NGOs find themselves competing for the same money and for the same 'symbolic space' (Pouligny 2005: 501), resulting in a short-term NGO community that lurches between in-vogue funding projects where donors, not the actors on the ground, set the agendas (Richmond & Franks 2009: 32-33). This has been shown to have been the case in Kosovo whereby, Local NGOs adjusted their programming to 'rapidly shifting international priorities' in order to secure funds, whilst international and local NGOs alike were 'often guilty of creating projects specifically in response to available funding as opposed to the needs of their beneficiaries' (Llamazares & Reynolds Levy 2003: 9).

Donors also attach 'strings' to their assistance (Richmond 2005: 437), including that the funder requires evidence that the benefits of endeavours have been measured (Walker 2004: 7). Funding therefore determines that those working in the field of peace building and conflict transformation to 'projectise' their work. According to Lederach (2005: 124 - 125), projects are:

Activities conducted under a broad, often vague purpose aimed at producing amazingly concrete results in a discrete time frame, most typically one to three years.

Lederach describes this process as ‘Reductionism par excellence’, arguing that the project mentality assumes two *inaccurate* ‘truisms’: that social change is ‘linear’; and that ‘social change is best measured by visible and verifiable results’.

Objectives, methods, and knowledge gaps addressed in research

In the following table I provide an overview of the objectives of the thesis, chapter by chapter, and detail the key literature drawn from, alongside identifying the gaps in knowledge addressed.

Objectives, Methods, and Knowledge Gaps Addressed in Research			Table 4
Aims and Objectives	Method to achieve objectives	Key Literature Drawn From (Sample)	Contribution to Knowledge
<p>Chapter Three: Kosovo's History and Background</p> <p>To provide the reader with historical background to the conflict and an understanding of how contemporary events relate to the broader picture of Kosovo's past and society. Inform the reader on the main conflict factors impeding positive peace since the war.</p>	<p>Secondary source (academic books, journal articles, reports, and media stories).</p> <p>Some primary data (observations and interviews).</p>	<p><u>Pre-Yugoslavia:</u> Malcolm (1998); Duijzings (2000); Vickers (1995); Judah (2000).</p> <p><u>Yugoslavia:</u> Pavlović (2005) Clark (2000)</p> <p><u>Post-Tito:</u> Kostovicova (2005); Clark (2000); Mertus (1999); Maliqi (1998).</p> <p><u>Contemporary Attitudes & Events:</u> Clark (2002); King & Mason (2006); O'Neil (2001).</p>	<p>Primarily a background chapter, alongside providing analysis of key factors impeding the deepening of peace since the war.</p>
<p>Chapter Four: Contemporary Interpretations of Peace and Peace building in Kosovo at the Grassroots</p>	<p>Secondary source (academic books, journal articles, reports, and media stories).</p>	<p>Francis (2010); Fisher & Zimina (2009); Volkan (2006); Beck (2002); Devic (2006); Richmond (2010).</p>	<p>Provides an analysis of peace and peace building in Kosovo as viewed from the grassroots; in particular concerning how a politicization of peace</p>

<p>To examine contemporary interpretations of peace and peace building from the grassroots in Kosovo, in order to identify key themes and to examine how local interpretations fit with the agendas set by external actors.</p>	<p>Primary data: Collected 2008 – 2011 from actors engaged with of GR peace building as participants; facilitators; and informed observers.</p>		<p>has taken place at the top level which has undermined peace building at the grassroots, and how external interpretations of peace and peace building have too narrowly centred on inter-ethnic relations.</p> <p>Argues the need to understand peace building in the context of people's every day lives, as related to a process of 'normalization'.</p>
<p>Chapter Five: Multi-ethnicity and Grassroots Peace Building in Kosovo</p> <p>To analyse how the agenda of multi-ethnicity, which was set by external actors, translated into peace building efforts at the grassroots; and to theorize on the experiences of those engaged with multi-ethnic peace building in order to understanding how actors at this level evaluate multi-ethnicity as both a goal and approach.</p>	<p>Secondary source (academic books, journal articles, reports, and media stories).</p> <p>Primary data: collected 2008 – 2010 from actors engaged with issues of GR peace building as participants; facilitators; and informed observers.</p>	<p><u>On multi-ethnicity and integration in Kosovo:</u> Nikolić (2005); Duijzings (2000); Kostovicova & Bechev (2004); Bieber (2006)</p> <p><u>On contact-hypothesis</u> Hewstone & Brown (1986); Abu-Nimer (2001); Pettifer (1998)</p>	<p>Provides insight into how individuals in Kosovo at the grassroots have experienced projects utilizing a contact approach, and asserts that contact has been a very limited approach to peace building in Kosovo, which has also had some positive effects.</p> <p>Emphasizes the need to start <i>not from ethnic relations but from encouraging critical thinking skills</i>. Criticizes the education system for contributing to 'collective oppression'.</p>
<p>Chapter Six: Us, The Peace Builders</p>	<p>Secondary source (academic books, journal articles,</p>	<p>Hahn (2007); Kraybill (2009); Kruhonja (2001); Gandhi (CW 1999).</p>	<p>Provides an analysis of how actors at the grassroots in Kosovo have experienced</p>

<p>To make explicit how certain attitudes and behaviours identified amongst external actors in Kosovo have impacted negatively on peace building at the grassroots.</p>	<p>reports, and media stories).</p> <p>Primary data: collected 2008 – 2010 from actors engaged with issues of GR peace building as participants; facilitators; and informed observers.</p>		<p>international intervention by external actors negatively, in relation less to what they have ‘done’ and more to how they have gone about it in Kosovo.</p> <p>Exposes the degree of anger present amongst grassroots actors about the international community’s conduct in Kosovo.</p> <p>Proposes that it is not that we need to ‘know more’, but that we must seek to raise our levels self-awareness as people who want to ‘do good’ in the world.</p>
<p>Chapter Seven: Grassroots Peace Building in Kosovo: Adding up to Peace Writ Large</p>	<p>Secondary source (academic books, journal articles, reports, and media stories).</p> <p>Primary data: collected 2008 – 2010 from actors engaged with issues of GR peace building as participants; facilitators; and informed observers.</p>	<p>Lederach, Neufeld & Culbertson (2007); CDA (2009; 2006); Stubbs (2007); Chigas & Woodrow (2009); Francis (2010).</p>	<p>Provides insight into how the international intervention has impacted positively on the lives of local young people, and how this is having a ‘rippling out’ effect in terms of a broader process of transformation.</p> <p>Argues that peace building in Kosovo has taken place through a ‘chaotic’ process whereby individuals have been exposed to new ideas and situations thus affecting an ‘opening up of hearts and minds’. This constitutes an informal but valuable form of capacity building.</p>
<p>To consolidate defining characteristics identified amongst respondents concerning positive Grassroots peace building efforts, through the example of two international organisations engaged in peace building at the grassroots</p>			

Chapter Three: Kosovo's History and Background

‘But finally there must and does come the question why, which is the hardest to answer because there are hundreds of answers to it, none of them good enough...’

Drakulić (1993: 7)

Introduction

This chapter provides the history and background to the Kosovo conflict and has three main aims. Firstly, its goal is to provide the reader with an understanding of how Kosovo arrived, in 1998, at the point of war which was to result in over 10,000 people losing their lives, 863,000 people seeking refuge beyond Kosovo's borders, 590, 000 IDPs (Independent International Commission on Kosovo 2001: 2); along with in the region of 6,000 missing persons (Clark 2002: 5). Secondly, it provides an analysis of the broader social and political landscape in which grassroots peace building has taken place with a focus on the period 2001-2008 covered in this study. Thirdly, it examines a number of roots and dynamics of the conflict: highlighting factors serving as barriers to the deepening of ‘positive peace’. Provided here also is a summary of information concerning Kosovo's territory and population.

This thesis as a whole does not take an explicitly historical approach to analysing peace building in Kosovo and draws instead upon the contemporary experiences of individuals involved in peace building activities. Nevertheless, I need to address the observation that in Kosovo, peace building efforts have been undermined by outsiders' lack of an adequate understanding of Kosovo's past. External actors, including the international media, have tended ‘to refer to the “conflict” in Kosovo as if it were an event that took place between 24 March and 11 June 1999’ (Clark 2002: 1). At the other end of the spectrum, the conflict has been presented as an age-old battle in which people have been killing each other for centuries. This is the ‘simple vision’, observed by Dejan Guzina, that ‘nothing ever changes in the Balkans: people simply keep killing each other for unknown and unintelligible reasons buried deep in the past’ (2003: 31). However, as Momčilo Pavlović points out, the fact that Serbs and Albanians had lived in Kosovo for centuries side by side, ‘albeit at some cultural and religious distance’, indicates that it would be inaccurate to ‘evaluate their relations as a never-ceasing conflict’ (2005: 8).

This chapter grounds our understanding of contemporary grassroots peace building within a wider understanding of Kosovo's history and social landscape; whilst providing an introduction into concerns examined later in the thesis, such as Kosovo's civil society, and

multi-ethnicity. Before providing here what, due to constraints on space, can only be a brief analysis of Kosovo's history, it is important to highlight two points. Firstly, in recounting Kosovo's past there lies a danger of enforcing certain dominant story lines about Kosovo, which risk oversimplifying the experiences of certain parties. Helena Zdravkovic-Zonta has described contemporary accounts of the history of Kosovo as narratives forged on notions of victims and villains (2009), whilst Pavlović argues that the 'truths' presented in this context of Kosovo have failed to accurately portray the experiences of Serbian communities in particular (see Pavlović 2005: 1 - 2). Another analysis might be that Serbs and Albanian have been *competing victims* in Kosovo: both in terms of how each party has recalled the past in contemporary times in order to bolster territorial claims, and in how Serbs and Albanians have sought to present their predicament to the outside world throughout history.

Secondly, there are two 'types' of history analysed here. The first concerns events that took place before people alive today were born but which are highly significant because they have been 'remembered' or 'inherited' and have helped to strengthen national identities and unity amongst different groups²³. The second pertains a set of contemporary events, which form both the direct experiences of individuals, and the experiences that individuals feel themselves to have lived through as they happened to members of their community within their lifetime.

Following a brief overview of Kosovo's territory and population, this chapter is divided into two sections. The first addresses Kosovo history from the end of Ottoman rule in 1912 to the end of the Kosovo War in 1999. In choosing which elements of Kosovo's history to present here, I have opted for those events that serve to illustrate how divisions have deepened between communities over the years, and how these have helped to form competing in-group narratives, which ultimately strengthens divides. This provides the background for the second section, where I analyse the negative peace that the international peace building mission inherited when it entered Kosovo in 1999, particularly in relation to physical and ideological divisions (as well as within them), the complexities of which are often overlooked in contemporary peace building literature.

²³ They are important also because these events have helped to define languages, borders, and religions observed in the region also.

Kosovo's territory and population

Kosovo is a small landlocked country located in the Western Balkans of approximately 4,200 square miles (about half the size of Wales in the United Kingdom) and home to close to 1.8 million people (Statistical Office of Kosovo - ESK 2011). Its capital city is Prishtinë/Priština. Kosovo is the poorest country in Europe where, according to the World Bank, over 40% of the population lives in poverty (2007)²⁴. Much of Kosovo's population subsist on money sent from abroad by Kosovo's Diaspora, which represents an estimated 15% of the economy, while 20-30% of Kosovo Albanians live abroad (CIA World Factbook 2011). Very little progress has been made in recent years in generating a thriving economy in Kosovo, and the World Bank has described Kosovo's economy as 'stagnant' (2008: iii). Unemployment is estimated at around 45% (CIA 2011), with real figures probably being even higher. Kosovo also has the youngest population in Europe, with around 40% per cent of its citizens being under the age of 20 (UNMIK 2011).

According to the latest census, ethnic Albanians make up 88% of Kosovo's population; a further 7% of the population is comprised of Serbs; whilst the remaining 5% of minorities are predominantly: Bosniak (Bosnian Muslims); Roma; Ashkali and Egyptian (Albanian speaking Roma thought to possess a unique heritage²⁵); Turkish; and Gorani (Muslim Slavs) (ESK 2011).

Kosovo's Serbian population lives mostly in northern Kosovo (an estimated 65,000 out of a local population of 80,500 OSCE 2008/2009) or in a number of 'enclaves' dotted around the country - the largest number being located in Graçanicë/Gračanica, close to Prishtinë/Priština. The languages spoken in Kosovo are Albanian (Gheg dialect, as opposed to Tosk spoken in much of Albania), Serbian, Romanise and Turkish. Serbs are predominantly Orthodox Christians, whilst Albanians are mostly Muslim along with a significant and growing Catholic community²⁶.

Part one: the end of Ottoman rule 1912, to the end of the Kosovo war 1999

²⁴ About fifteen % of the population is estimated to be extremely poor, defined as individuals who have difficulty meeting their basic nutritional needs. About forty five per cent (a little over 2 in 5 Kosovars) report a consumption level below the poverty line. These poverty rates are very high compared to neighbouring countries, and unlike other countries in the region, have not changed over time. See World Bank (2007) 'Poverty Assessment Volume II'

²⁵ See e.g. Ger Duijzings 2000 *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo*

²⁶ See e.g. Matteo Albertini (2011) 'The Vatican's Growing Prominence in Kosovo' (*Balkan Analysis*)

Introduction

I begin this review of Kosovo's history from just prior to the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in Kosovo, and specifically with the emergence of Serbian and Albanian nationalist discourses from the first half of the 19th century. However, it is worth highlighting first that, prior to the break up of the Ottoman Empire, which was to mark the beginning of several distinct periods of hostility between communities, certain allegiances and cooperation *had* been enjoyed between ethnic and religious groups in Kosovo under the Ottomans.

Though Albanians and Serbs had different experiences within the Empire - for example, Albanians on the whole converted to Islam, whilst Serbs remained predominantly Orthodox Christians - divisions were not absolute. As Noel Malcolm (2006: 24) points out, Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo shared many commonalities, with both groups being mostly peasants who worked the land. Malcolm brings to our attention two distinct examples of Serb-Albanian cooperation, as in 1689 both Albanians and Serbs joined Austrian forces in a failed attempt to overthrow the Ottomans, and in 1822 a joint protest was organised to remove a tyrannical pasha from Prishtinë/Priština (1998: 139 - 183). Ger Duijzings also argues that Kosovo has a history of coexistence, and emphasises that through the ages 'the ethnic and religious barriers have been anything but watertight' (2000: 1). Additional arguments exist concerning assimilation and religious conversions between Albanians and Serbs which potentially make divisions between these ethnic groups less clear-cut (see e.g. Duijzings 2000: 17; Malcolm 1998: 116 - 139), however, such accounts tend to be highly politicised today and it has been argued that such instances were fairly small, and are difficult to verify (Malcolm 2006).

Ethnic relations in this period of Kosovo's history are often interpreted as a situation of on-going power reversal, whereby domination of one community over the other has served as the defining feature of Serbian-Albanian relations (Denisa Kostovicova 2005: 2). Whilst this is certainly true in terms of understanding the overall pattern of events, it is also helpful to appreciate that despite the strife that each community has endured at the hands of the other, some of which I focus on here, there have always been pockets of good relations in the territory. These have been localized (i.e. within villages, between certain families and neighbours), forged on amicable contact in common work places (particularly during 'Tito's Yugoslavia'), or through regional trade, for example. Therefore it is unhelpful to view historical events only from the crude perspective of which 'side' has inflicted injury upon the other across history. Rather, how certain events have been *remembered* in the collective

imagination and emphasised since to bolster nationalist agendas in the present, or to project an image of collective victimhood by one community over another, is of primary importance here. Important also is to keep in mind Pavlović's (2005: 6) observation that in Kosovo 'Albanians never held sole state power nor did Albanians ever have the monopoly of violence'.

Emergence of Serbian and Albanian Identities

To understand how Kosovo's distant past history has been recalled in the present, I begin here with an explanation of how Serbian and Albanian national identities emerged. The Ottoman Empire ruled the region from the 14th century, to be overthrown in Kosovo in 1912. However, prior to this ousting of the Ottomans, Serbian and Albanian national identities had begun to flourish. Within the Serbian community epic poems and folk tales passed down orally through generations immortalising past glories and defeats amongst the peoples of the region became popular (Ivo Banac 1984: 103; Malcolm 1998: 79 - 80). Crucially, 'memories' of the battle of Kosovo in 1389, which saw Serbia defeated at the hands of the Ottomans; the death of the Serbian Prince Lazar; and the loss of Kosovo, formed an important part of the Serbian discourse, and Kosovo was increasingly described in terms of being a holy land and referred to as Serbia's 'Jerusalem'²⁷ (see Thomas A. Emmert 1990 for an in-depth discussion of this theme). In 1878, Serbs retook the city of Niš (north west of Kosovo's border) from the Ottomans, signifying a rise in Serbia's power, and resulting in Albanians fleeing areas of Southern Serbia, stretching from Leskovac (an area bordering Kosovo) to Niš, which was annexed to Serbia.

Albanian national identity emerged later in the 19th century, in part as a reaction to Serbia's growing power in the region. Miranda Vickers has commented that one of the greatest obstacles to the national advancement of the Albanians was the Ottoman administration's refusal to recognize Albanians not as Turks, and therefore Ottoman rule delayed the rise of Albanian national consciousness and a national movement (1995: 31). The Albanian poet Naim Frashëri authored poems in this period, including one entitled 'History of Skanderbeg', recalling the heroic efforts of the Albanian Gjerg Skanderbeg who had successfully challenged Ottoman rule in the 15th century. Crucially, in 1878, Albanian leaders from the region formed the Prizren League, which called for the unification of Albanian areas, and to the right for Albanians to govern Kosovo. The signing of the League of Prizren is considered as the crucial moment at which a shared Albanian identity was truly

²⁷ According to the legend, Prince Lazar is said to have made a choice between choosing a kingdom on earth (i.e. surrendering to the Ottomans) or a kingdom in heaven (sacrificing his life in a fight for Kosovo's territory). He chose the latter and was immortalised as Serbia's martyr.

forged (Vickers 1995: 30). In 1912, Albanians led a successful uprising against the Ottomans; however, later that year Serbs forced the Ottomans out of Kosovo and forcibly reintegrated Kosovo into Serbia. An estimated 20,000 to 25,000 Albanians were killed at this time (Malcolm 1998: 254), marking a tragic period for Albanians, yet something of a triumph for Serbia as it regained control over Kosovo for the first time since its much remembered loss in 1389 (Tim Judah 2000: 17 - 18). As Armend Bekaj explains:

This went against the wishes of its Albanian majority population, who saw unification with the newly created Albania as the natural course of events. In actual fact, they were cut off from it (2010: 9).

Contemporary narratives on the struggles that ethnic communities in Kosovo have endured frequently return to this period. For Albanians, the forced integration of Kosovo into Serbia to this day represents a significant and painful loss as a national group. The forming of the League of Prizren is recalled as a historical landmark, with 10th June representing an important national day for Albanians in Kosovo. For Serbs, the reclaiming of Kosovo in 1912 signified the righting of an archaic wrong, and the return of their hallowed territory. It is not difficult therefore to see how for Serbia, Albanians in Kosovo represented a serious threat to Serbian hegemony, particularly as Albanians represented a significant majority in the territory at this time.

The First and Second Yugoslavia

Between the First and Second World Wars, in what was the first incarnation of ‘Yugoslavia’, attempts were made by Serbia to intentionally shift the demographic population of Kosovo in favour of Serbs, by ‘repatriating’ Albanians to Turkey. Though euphemistically called ‘repatriation’, all the evidence suggests that it focused not on the small Turkish population, which remained in the territory, but wholly on Albanians (Malcolm 2006 59-63). This campaign was interrupted by the arrival of the Second World War, although, up to 150, 000 Albanians and other Muslims are thought to have left Kosovo in this period to Albania and Turkey; either due to unfavourable treatment by Serbs (Malcolm 1998: 286) or simply through a desire to seek a better life. In further efforts to bolster the Serbian population in Kosovo, Serbs from across Serbia were offered financial incentives to settle in the territory as ‘colonialist’, and up to 70,000 Serbs are thought to have done so at this time (Malcolm 1998: 282).

During the Second World War, Kosovo was occupied mainly by the Italians and integrated into Albania. Albanians used this as an opportunity to carry out revenge attacks against Serbs and to assert their national right to the territory. As many as 40,000 Serbs and Montenegrins were forced to flee Kosovo at this time (Malcolm 1998: 305). Yet in 1945, at the end of the war, Kosovo was reintegrated into Serbia, and formed part of a 'second' Yugoslavia.

Despite the six republics that comprised Yugoslavia being granted within its constitution the right to secede, Kosovo (which was granted 'regional autonomy' in Serbia along with Vojvodina in the north) was not. Tito, Prime Minister from 1943-63 and President until his death in 1980, is thought to have recognised the value of Kosovo being integrated into Albania at this time. However, he abstained from facilitating this, knowing the resistance that would be faced by Serbs (Vickers 1995). In 1953, Serbia succeeded in 'repatriating' 100,000 Albanians to Turkey (Clark: 2000: 11-12), although it is understood also that some chose to leave Kosovo at this time (Nikolai Botev, 1994: 465). Kosovo's borders were re-drawn in this period and the Eastern area was removed from Kosovo's territory and northern areas integrated into it - the goal again being to increase the Serbian, and decrease the Albanian, population.

Under communism, from 1955, the Serbian Aleksander Ranković, Minister for the Interior and head of the secret police (UDBa), exerted a repressive and at times violent influence over Kosovo, and on Albanians in particular. Albanians, whose commitment as communist was suspect amidst fears they still wished to align with Albania, suffered at his hands, with pressure placed on them to emigrate. Between 1954 and 1957, a further 195,000 Albanians are thought to have left Yugoslavia, and by 1966 the figure reached 235,000 (Vickers 1995: 191). Tito removed Ranković in 1966, and his dismissal has been described as a heavy moral and psychological blow to those Serbs who possessed supremacy goals in Kosovo, whilst for Albanians, the event was 'a milestone in their campaign for the assertion of their national rights' (Vickers 1995: 191).

In 1968, Tito offered Albanian leaders greater autonomy, economic aid, promises of reforms, and the appointment of more Albanians to responsible positions (Vickers 1995: 192), in recognition of their majority status in Kosovo. This fuelled, however, an increasingly militant nationalism amongst Albanians culminating in serious riots in November 1968, with the majority of demonstrators demanding republic status of Kosovo

and a significant minority calling for a union with Albania (Vickers 1995: 192). In 1970, Kosovo was given its own Albanian language university in Prishtinë/Priština, and in 1974, in response to further pressures, Kosovo was granted autonomy from Serbia, becoming a Yugoslav Republic all but in name (Pavlović 2005: 16). It is within this period that large numbers of Serbs began to leave Kosovo, a concern I address to below.

Under Tito the open discussion of inter-ethnic relations was more or less ‘taboo’, and those who attempted to tackle ‘ethnic issues’ publicly were reprimanded. This was the case, for example, of Dobrica Ćosić, a communist hardliner who was purged from the Party in 1968 for complaining that Serbs and Montenegrins felt threatened in Kosovo, and that pressure was being placed upon them by Albanians to emigrate (Vickers 1995: 13). Rather than acknowledging the ethnic dimension to such problems, the Committee replied that many Albanians were also leaving Kosovo due to the weak economy (Clark 2000); thus an official line emerged that migration from Kosovo from the late 1960s onwards was economic in nature. Additionally, three other officials - Miloš Sekulović, Jovo Šotra, and Kadri Reufi (an ethnic Turk) - on raising concerns about the growing Albaniansation of Kosovo - were then removed from the Provincial Committee and public life: an effect that silenced other non-Albanian politicians (Pavlović 2005: 26).

The watchword of Tito's Yugoslavia, up until his death in 1980, was Brotherhood and Unity (*Bratstvo i Jedinstvo*) and multi-ethnicity formed an essential part of its outlook. Tito's goal was to foster links and equality amongst members of the disparate communities living in the territories of the former Yugoslavia, and his approach in Kosovo was characterised by policies such as the ‘ethnic keys’, through which, jobs, housing, and important positions within the administration were allocated proportionally between different ethnic groups (Duijzings 1996: 114). However, how such policies panned out at a municipal level in Kosovo is poorly documented. What is important to note in the context of this study is that despite the efforts of Tito, no deep integration between communities occurred in Kosovo at this time. Cross-group marriage rates remained negligible - a fact which can largely be put down to the linguistic and cultural difference which separate communities as much as anything else (see e.g. Botev 1994). As Dimitar Bechev & Kostovicova (2004) suggest, in Kosovo, the trend was essentially that ‘one's preferred neighbour was one's ethnic kin’. This is illustrated through statistics showing that in the period 1961 to 1981, for example, 1,214 settlements in Kosovo became ethnically uniform. Despite this, a generation of workers who were employed in state enterprises at this time frequently recall friendly working

relationships between members of ethnic groups, even if these didn't extend to deep social ties²⁸. There was also a high level of bilingualism at this time, as Albanians spoke Serbian, and some Serbs learnt Albanian also.

The death of Tito and the 1980s

The death of Tito in 1980 has been compared to the sweeping away of a dam: one that was forged on his ideology and which approached 'ethnic feeling' by denying its existence or attributing it to 'counter-revolutionary agitation' (Clark 2000: 8). Tito's death came at a time when Yugoslavia was facing economic crisis, with Kosovo the worst hit. Large numbers of Albanians were graduating from university yet there were far few jobs to absorb them, and the public administration system was over-staffed and inefficient. From the end of the 1960s onwards, large numbers of Serbs had begun leaving Kosovo for other parts of Serbia, and this, coupled with an exceptionally high birth rate amongst Albanians, painted a picture (particularly for nationalist) that a demographic battle was taking place in Kosovo. Reasons given for this significant Serbian migration are mixed, but evidence suggest that it was not only the lack of opportunities for Serbs - and thus economic migration - which drew them away, but also that Serbs were facing discrimination and intimidation by the Albanian majority (Ruza Petrovic & Marina Blagojevic 1999: 222). Lazar Nikolić (2003: 63) argues that:

During this period of extremely high autonomy (1974-91) Kosovo established a pattern of discrimination over Serbs, pushing them to leave. As many as 100,000 Serbs left Kosovo in the 20-25 year period among which 75-80 per cent did so under pressure.

In 1981, protests broke out within the Albanian University, led by Albanian students, which began as spontaneous demonstrations about poor students services, but which in the days that followed, adopted more far-reaching agendas. Marxist-Leninist actors used the protests as a means to promote, according to the activist Hydajet Hyseni, nationalistic goals (Mertus 1999: 33 see also Judah 2000) and to push for a republic. The Albanian analysis Shelzen Maliqi has commented that these protests damaged all that Albanians in Kosovo had been working for within Yugoslavia (see Judah 2000). For the general population in Kosovo these protests marked the beginning of a very significant deepening of divisions between communities (Mertus 1999: 46). The protests were quelled through excessive violence by state forces with reported deaths ranging from eleven ('official' figures) to three hundred

²⁸ Author's own observations

(reported by Amnesty International) with Albanians claiming many more than this were killed (Mertus 1999: 293). Albanians were portrayed in the media as ‘terrorists’ and the protests as concerted efforts to undermine Kosovo’s status within Yugoslavia.

As the 1980s wore on, an increasingly overt nationalist narrative re-emerged on Kosovo, which had previously been repressed under Tito. In 1986, a group of intellectual elites from the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts (SANU) in Belgrade drafted a memorandum, which though never published, brandished Albanians in Kosovo as ‘terrorists’ and Muslims in Yugoslavia as ‘Turks’, and which was adopted by many as a Serbian manifesto (Clark 2000: 17 - 18). SANU’s memorandum picked up pre-Tito nationalist thought, notable the thinking of Vaso Cubrilovic who in 1937 and 1944, for example, had written documents suggesting the forcible expulsion of Albanians from Kosovo (Judah 2000: 23- 25; 31 - 32). The power of SANU’s narrative to provoke a strong reaction owes much to the Serbian nationalist narrative, which as described above had been forged upon the immortalised loss of Kosovo in 1389. Thus any threat to Kosovo in the present was presented as an attempt to undermine the foundations of Serbian nationhood.

The funeral of Ranković in August 1983 attracted tens of thousands of Serbs, and this mass public mourning represented a loss by Serbs of Kosovo’s protector (Clark 2000: 16). Nationalist historians and Orthodox priests became active in enforcing the line that Kosovo was facing ‘crucifixion’ through Albanian domination, whilst a number of popular ‘story-lines’ began to be circulated, including one suggesting that Albanians were systematically raping Serbs in Kosovo. This was compounded by the ‘Martinović case’ in particular, where in 1985 a Serbian man was reported (though the truth was never established) as having been raped with a bottle by an Albanian. As Obershall explains, the media at this time fed the public with exaggerated and even fabricated stories. Obershall provides the following extract from one news report to illustrate this point:

In Pec, on the weekend, three young Serb women were raped by Albanians. One rapist was later arrested, the [Albanian] judge sentenced him to 15 days in jail...the same day the same judge sentenced a Serb man to 40 days in jail for singing a patriotic Serb song (Markovic 1998 cited in Obershall 2000: 990)

Other cases were also used to whip up anti-Albanian sentiments, such as that of an Albanian soldier (later exposed as being mentally ill) who in 1987 opened fire on his fellow recruits including Serbs - killing four of them and wounding five others (Mertus 1999: 145). Blagojević & Petrovic (1999) recorded some highly emotional attitudes within Serbian

households about Albanians in Kosovo at this time, with one respondent stating for example,

The Albanians are firmly resolved to achieve their goal and to unite with Albania. They don't regret the casualties which occur while achieving this - the victims are the Serbs and Montenegrins.

From 1981 disenfranchised Serbs in Kosovo began to mobilise from the grassroots, although whether this mobilisation was from the grassroots or whether it was orchestrated, or at least firmly encouraged by actors in Belgrade (including the nationalist and hardliner Dobrica Ćosić) remains open to debate (see e.g. Silber & Little 1997: 34-35; Pavlović 2005). Their goal was to lobby Belgrade about inter-ethnic inequality, and the increasingly favourable atmosphere for Albanians over Serbs in Kosovo (Pavlović 2005: 31). This activity resulted in a high level of politicisation amongst Kosovo's Serbs (Pavlović 2005: 31) and it was to this Serbian discontent that the politician Slobodan Milošević responded in April 1987, when he was sent to Kosovo by Ivan Stambolić (President of Serbia) to address the increasing anger. In a series of events that were highly orchestrated by Serbian lobbyists in Kosovo at this time, Milošević came before a huge crowd of Serbs at the site of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo and made a speech with an overtly nationalistic tone, which was to win him tremendous support amongst Serbs in Kosovo.

Milošević recognised the power of this disenfranchised community to win him support in his political career, and drew comparisons in his speech between what Serbs were facing at that time in Kosovo, and their loss of the territory to the Turks in 1389. Many view this fated trip to Kosovo as the beginning of Milošević's overtly nationalistic and aggressive agenda that led to Yugoslavia's bloody demise, leading Judah to remark that 'the cancer that killed Yugoslavia began in Kosovo' (2000: 33). Milošević's overtly racist attitudes towards Albanians and his position on Kosovo is highlighted here in a discussion he had with Warren Zimmerman, the American Ambassador to Yugoslavia at this time,

Milošević told him: 'Kosovo has always been Serbian, except for a brief period under World War II. Yet we have given the Albanians their own government, their own parliament, their own national library, and their own schools. We have even given them their own Academy of Sciences. Have you Americans given your blacks their own Academy of Sciences?' (Zimmerman 1996 cited in LeBor 2002).

In 1989, Milošević proposed constitutional amendments annulling Kosovo's autonomy, and went on to become President of Serbia later that year. Kostovicova has described the

abolition of Kosovo's autonomy for Serbs as 'the act of reclaiming Serbianness, and shedding any vestiges of "false" identity based on ideology' (2005: 5).

One final important point that needs to be touched on here concerns the prejudices that existed in Yugoslavia in this period. Despite Tito's policy of Brotherhood and Unity, Albanians in Kosovo persistently faced prejudice within the Federation, and were traditionally at the lowest end of the social strata. This reflected the Albanian community's low levels of literacy, traditional and clan-like family structures, and their system of resolving conflicts through blood feuds, for example, making them easy targets for being brandished as 'backwards'. As communist ideology fell away, status was judged increasingly on economic success, and Albanians were by far the poorest group in the region. The Serbian novelist Vladimir Arsenijevic (2007) has argued that Albanians were always forced to play the role of the 'absolute outsiders' in Yugoslavia, whilst Drakulic (1999) describes Albanians as 'barely visible' 'separate', and as 'the underdogs'.

The Croatian writer Dubravka Ugrešić, in her humorous essay examining the truth behind ethnic relations in the Former Yugoslavia, admits that despite having Titoite ideology drummed into her from childhood, she internalised stereotypes passed down to her by her parents. She writes:

I grew up in a country where *brotherhood* and *unity* were *the apple of your eye*, but at the same time the culture encouraged stereotypes about all the members of the brotherhood. I lived surrounded by Slovenes who were *penny pinchers* (...) Montenegrins, who were *lazy*, Croats who were *fags* and *nitpickers*, Serbs who were *yokels*, Macedonians who were *vegetable-growing hicks*, Bosnians, who were *dense*, Albanians, who somehow weren't even human, Muslims who instead of five had six toes, the minority Italians who ate cats and the Gypsies (...) *who stole little children*. All in all it was a colourful community (2007: 25, emphasis original).

The dehumanisation of Albanians, which was to take on a much more sinister hue under Milošević was to a greater or lesser extent already in existence.

Occupation & Civil Resistance (1989 - 1998)

The scrapping of Kosovo's autonomy by Milošević was met by massive protests amongst Albanians in Kosovo, including a major strike by miners. Milošević set about crushing Albanian opposition, and began implementing a policy of mass-sacking of the Albanian work force in Kosovo: which included locking Albanian teachers out of schools from 1991

onwards, whilst the enrolment of Albanian children in schools was forcibly restricted, and Albanians teaching staff were dismissed en masse from Prishtinë/Priština University (Kostovicova 2005). Milošević's overall goal in this period was to make the life of the Albanian population as uncomfortable as possible in order to provoke a violent reaction: potentially one that would warrant a Serbian military intervention leading to the removal of the Albanian population en masse. One particularly alarming incident that occurred at this time was in the spring of 1990, when around 4,000 Albanian children were rushed to medical facilities in Kosovo following what Albanians claim to have been a mass poisoning in schools. Medical evidence about the alleged poisoning is inconclusive, however Albanians describe the symptoms as genuine and as the work of Serbian secret services operating in Kosovo; whilst Serbs accused Albanians of making the case up, and diagnosed Albanians as 'suffering from nationalism' (Kostovicova 2005: 77).

The alleged poisoning episode exacerbated feelings amongst Albanians that Serbian doctors could not be trusted and for some time afterwards, many Albanian families avoided dealings with Serbian medical services (Clark 2000: 106). Later that year, over half of the Albanian medical staff of Kosovo was sacked, with any sign of disloyalty cited as reason for dismissal, including treating demonstrators, or writing prescriptions in Albanian; whilst police even dragged senior Albanian doctors from their offices (Clark 2000: 106). Additionally, Albanian police officers and any person holding a position of influence were systematically dismissed. Within a year, more than 45 per cent of Albanians in employment had lost their jobs, and ultimately nearly 90 per cent became unemployed (Clark 2000: 74).

In the face of Milošević's aggressive policies, Albanians in Kosovo began to organize a movement of civil resistance forged on nonviolence, from the very end of the 1980s onwards, though as Clark points out, the exact moment such a policy was adopted is unclear (2000: 46). This movement emerged at the same time as the fall of the Berlin wall, a point in history when many things seemed possible, and can be best summed up through a number of key actions, activities, and organisations, which made it possible. First and foremost, Albanians set about organising a parallel system of education, health care and government. A major political party, the Democratic League of Kosovo (Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës - LDK) emerged in 1989, which succeeded in attracting an estimated membership of 200,000 by early 1990 (Clark 2000: 82). Ibrahim Rugova was elected President of the Republic of Kosovo, and on 19 October 1990, members of the former provincial Assembly amended the

constitution and declared Kosovo's independence (Ibid.), though this was not recognised beyond the Albanian community.

The Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHR), an Albanian civil society organisation established in December 1989, spearheaded an impressive campaign through which it urged and supported Albanians to resist Serbian provocation; encouraging a policy of recording Human Rights abuses instead (Clark 2000: 55-56). Alongside the efforts of CDHRF was a remarkably successful campaign to end the age-old tradition of blood feuds, which was led by Anton Çetta and the Catholic priest Don Lush Gjergj between 1990 and 1992. This campaign resulted in the resolution of more than 2000 feuds at this time and the near elimination of this tradition (Clark 2000: 63). Other actions included a Women's Literacy campaign carried out by the organisation, Motrat Qiriaz, and the vast humanitarian efforts of the Mother Theresa Foundation, which provided health care, food and other aid to Albanians throughout Kosovo and was led by an army of volunteers. From January 1992, children began being educated in private houses. Kostovicova (2005: 3) has described the establishment of these home schools as,

An expression of Albanians' strong sense of nationhood and its defence, and a response to an equally strong expression of Serbian identity, and its attempted political imposition in Kosovo.

All this activity took place in a climate of continuous police raids in villages and frequent arrests of the Albanian population, which often resulted in severe beating. As Clark points out, these attacks often had a psychological approach, for instance, 'humiliating a father in front of his family - and police conduct aimed to offend Albanian cultural norms' (2000: 6).

Whilst Maliqi (1996:147) has described the greatest success of the civil resistance movement as 'managing to persuade the Kosova Albanian masses to keep their tempers, and not start the war that Belgrade wanted', its actions were aimed also at 'modernization' in order to project to the West the image of a united Albanian front in Kosovo: one that was willing to embrace 'European values' thus making the Albanian cause worthy of international intervention. 'To Europe with a pencil' was the slogan of Motrat Qiriaz, for example (Clark 2000: 67). Whilst Rugova worked hard to lobby foreign governments in a bid to highlight the plight of the severely oppressed Albanian population in Kosovo, Bekaj argues that this was largely in vein:

In the first half of the 1990's Kosovo never really made it to the forefront of international negotiations. With the intensification of the wars in Croatia and then

Bosnia, Kosovo was completely sidelined and remained in the margins of the international corridors of power (Bekaj: 2010: 13).

Despite this, lobbying efforts should not be dismissed entirely as they succeeded in influencing the outgoing President George Bush and incoming President Bill Clinton to threaten military action (Clark 2000: 89).

This period was in many ways an exceptional one in Kosovo's history, as it was the time when Kosovo was highly threatened, yet a moment of great idealism and social solidarity within Albanian society, which went beyond normal patterns of solidarity usually limited to family over community. Bridges were built between Marxist-Leninist groups, communist, and actors within the LDK, as this time (Maliqi 1996: 148), and Maliqi has commented that the adoption of a united front came as a surprise to no one more than to Albanians themselves (1998: 99). However, as the '90s wore on, sections of Albanian society became frustrated with Rugova's passive approach, as he was criticized for pursuing one single channel of activity only - that of winning support from the West. As Kostovicova (2005: 4) explains,

Albanian disenchantment with the passive resistance emerged from the realization of its impotence in removing Serbian repression.

Disillusionment was linked also to very real fears in the face of what was taking place in Bosnia, and a desire amongst the population to avoid such a war in Kosovo at all costs. Maliqi made the chilling observation at this time that war had not yet happened in Kosovo, not only due to the Albanian resistance, but also because Serbia's military was engaged in other wars (Maliqi 1996: 143).

In 1997, the Albanian students union (UPSUP) began holding peaceful protests calling for their right to return to university premises, which went against the status quo of passive resistance. By staging such protests, Albanian students were challenging both the Serbian policy of ethnic domination and segregation in Kosovo; and the unquestioned policy of passive resistance advocated by Rugova (Kostovicova 2005: 192). UPSUP's leaders criticized LDK's approach; calling for more active (though still nonviolent) action as 'an alternative to waiting' (Clark 2002: 151). Though Rugova urged the students not to protest (fearful of the consequences, and acting on the advice of foreign diplomats), Prime Minister in-Exile, Bujar Bukoshi, accused the Kosovo leadership of having 'overly pacified the Albanians' (Kostovicova 2005: 193) and these protests succeeded in both challenging the dominant LDK-led approach to the Serbian aggression (which Bekaj describes as 'stifled by

inertia'²⁹) and also in attracting substantial interest in the foreign media (Bekaj 2010: 14). One member of the student leadership argued at the time that Albanians as a nation would only be listened to if they

Endanger the peace and stability in the region. We want peace, but we cannot give freedom for the price of peace (Kostovicova 2005: 194)³⁰.

The Rise of UÇK, War, and Revenge: 1997 to 1999

On 28 November 1997 (the Albanian national day) the Kosova Liberation Army (UÇK) made its first public appearance, having up until this point been a shadowy group, whose existence lay in doubt. The UÇK had its roots in the activities of the LPK (Levizja Popullore e Kosovës): a political organisation established in 1982 (Bekaj 2010: 16), and the UÇK was not the only military force to emerge at this time. Under the Ministry of Defence, the LDK-led government had created a military formation called 'The Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo' (*Forcat e Armatosura të Republikës së Kosovës*) or FARK, which was comprised of former ethnic Albanian Yugoslav army officers, who were recruited into a 'piecemeal' fighting force (IWPR 2005). Whilst the LDK parallel government of Kosovo maintained the belief that since they had won the elections, they still enjoyed the legitimacy of representing the Albanian people of Kosovo (Bekaj 2010: 20), the upsurge of the UÇK was swift, and FARK was to play a very marginal role in subsequent events.

This rise of the UÇK was aided in particular by an economic crisis in Albania in 1997, which made large quantities of weaponry available on the black market; described by O'Neill as a 'god-send to the nascent constellation of small Kosovo Albanian armed groups' (2002: 22). Whilst UÇK and the LDK established lines of communication, the groups remained ideologically divided. In February 1998, UÇK was publicly condemned by President Clinton's special envoy to the Balkans, Robert Gelbart, who criticized any 'terrorist activities' in Kosovo. Arguably, Gelbart's comments gave Milošević the green light he wanted to go ahead and crush the UÇK - which he set about doing in March 1998 (O'Neill 2002: 24).

In March 1998 a co-founder of the UÇK, Adem Jashari, along with 56 members of his extended family, including women and children, were massacred by Serbian forces in the

²⁹ Characterized by Ibrahim Rugova's admission that his policy was based on the premise that it is 'better to do nothing and stay alive than to be massacred' (Banac in Ed. Blitz 2006: 36).

³⁰ In a survey conducted by the Albanian student paper *Bota e re* on students' opinions for solving the Kosovo issue, eight per cent favored a policy of passive pacifism, sixty four point five per cent advocated active pacifism, and twenty seven point five per cent urged armed struggle (Kostovicova 2005: 194).

village of Prekaz/Precaj in the region of Drenicë/Drenica. This massacre caused a massive reaction amongst the Albanian population, and UÇK membership jumped rapidly to 10,000 volunteers (Bekaj 2010: 22). By October 1998, 1,500 Albanians had been killed in fighting, whilst the number of IDPs reached 300,000 (Ibid.). In November 1998 a ceasefire was agreed, together with the establishment of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission, however despite this, Milošević sent further troops and artillery into Kosovo, and NATO threatened Milošević with airstrikes if he did not withdraw his forces before March 24th 1999 - a threat he ignored. Thus NATO began a seventy-eight day bombing campaign against Serbia, and on June 10th the war ended as Milošević's troops were forced to withdraw. The war resulted in a highly contested number of deaths, mass displacement of people and a high level of rape³¹, which was used also as a weapon of war.

At the end of the war, despite the international presence, Serbs in Kosovo faced a wave of revenge attacks, as did those deemed to have supported the Serbian regime including Roma and non-loyal Albanians. A significant, though contested number of people disappeared or lost their lives at this time (Clark 2002)³². The evidence suggests that this violence was, if not sanctioned, then tolerated by KFOR. O'Neill explains,

KFOR's initial policy was to be soft on revenge attacks. U.S. military and diplomatic staff especially were quick to explain and even excuse the attacks on minorities. Their position was that after such violence and ethnic cleansing, vengeance happens (O'Neill 2002: 46).

Many Serbs fled Kosovo at this time, although a substantial number remained, retreating in many cases to northern Mitrovicë /Mitrovica or to Serbian enclaves. The vast majority of Albanians who left Kosovo as refugees returned in the weeks and months following the war.

Part two: the journey to positive peace

In this section I analyse key factors that have impeded the deepening of peace in Kosovo since the war - from the point of the international intervention in 1999 through to 2008.

The factors examined here encompass both structural elements - the 'socio-political' – including Kosovo's unresolved final status; the existence of a weak and divided Albanian

³¹ See UNFPA (1999) *Assessment Report on Sexual Violence in Kosovo*.

³² The most comprehensive analysis carried out in 2001 suggests that between 12th June 1999 and December 2000 at least 932 people were abducted or disappeared, the whereabouts of 593 remained unknown, and 62 were known to have been killed. See HLC (2001) 'Abductions and disappearances of non-Albanians in Kosovo'

leadership, and the abysmal socio-economic situation in the territory; alongside the experiences and attitudes of individuals - the 'individual/personal' dimension - encompassing the fear of future violence, the existence of contrasting narratives concerning events of the past, and the pain and grief that has burdened the population.

Resolution of Kosovo's final status

NATO ceased its air campaign on June 10th 1999, and Kosovo was declared a 'protectorate' by the Security Council, to be administered by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) under the aegis of Security Council resolution 1244, through which Kosovo remained officially part of Serbia, yet under UN control. A vast international presence descended on Kosovo at this time, which included a Kosovo force under NATO (KFOR) of 50,000 peacekeepers (NATO 2011), alongside the UN, which employed 6,500 international personnel and 5,300 local staff at its peak (UNMIK 2006: 11-13). As mentioned earlier, in the region of one thousand international NGOs became active in the territory at this time, which employed a huge number of international staff (Pula 2005). UNMIK was the highest per capita funding of any international humanitarian mission to date, and Kosovo received twenty-five times more money and fifty times more troops on a per capita basis than Afghanistan (King and Mason 2006: x).

In its bid to administer Kosovo, UNMIK established the Provisional Institutions for Self Governance (PISG), comprised of four pillars of civilian activity, overseen by one single international Special Representative (SRSG), of which Kosovo has seen seven. Pillar One, led by UNHCR, oversaw humanitarian aspects of the intervention. Pillar Two concerned 'Civil Administration' and was headed by the UN: taking responsibility for the daily running of Kosovo. Pillar Three, led by OSCE, was charged with 'institution-building', monitoring, and Human Rights. Pillar Four concerned economic reconstruction under the EU.

Albanians insisted from the outset that independence was the only solution for Kosovo, whilst the Serbian government in Belgrade blocked this. Though resolution 1244 succeeded in bringing a frozen peace to Kosovo, it proved problematic as it offered little possibility for the legal extrication of Kosovo from Serbia, which remained the primary goal of the Albanian population. A majority vote was needed from Security Council members to enable any decisive action, and Serbia and its ally Russia in particular, remained faithfully opposed.

Whilst some view 1244 as the only option to ending the violence in Kosovo, others have interpreted it as a political catastrophe. Banac (2006: 41) argues,

Had the goal of the operation been to unseat Milošević, to denazify Serbia and to create a democratic polity in rump Yugoslavia, the Kosovo endgame to the Yugoslav wars would have been worth it. (...) the prolonged NATO bombing campaign only succeeded in restoring the ethnically cleansed Kosovar Albanians to their homeland. In every other way it was a political failure.

The riddle of how to resolve Kosovo's final status rested on two key dilemmas. The first surrounded fears that an independent Kosovo would set a calamitous precedent globally, including in the region, and result in a domino effect whereby other territories would act also on long held aspirations to secede, therefore following Kosovo's example (Weller, 2008: 659). The second quandary, which perplexed the international community, surrounded the question of whether Kosovo could rightly claim independence on the grounds that its majority population had been the victim of gross human rights abuses, and that therefore Serbia had essentially lost its *legitimacy* as ruler (Grace Bolton & Gezim Visoka 2011). Whilst it was initially envisaged that final status would be addressed following the first three years of international administration, by 2002, no progress had been made on this issue. As Woodrow (2000) points out, the approach adopted by international power brokers after the war was overwhelming to wait and see, and in doing so, essentially to do nothing.

In 2002, UNMIK, led by SRSG Michael Steiner, articulated a policy known as 'standards before status', through which Steiner set out eight bench marks to be achieved by PISG before Kosovo's final status could be addressed. Those standards concerned: the functioning of democratic institutions; rule of law; freedom of movement (primarily aimed at minorities); returns and reintegration (of refugees and IDPs); the economy; property rights; dialogue with Belgrade; and the Kosovo Protection Corps (Security Council 2004:1). However, so far-reaching were these standards, it was impossible to imagine Kosovo making substantial progress on them in the near future, not to mention that they bordered on hypocrisy, considering that members of the Western European countries who promoted them could barely claim to have achieved some of these standards within their own territories³³. Arguably also, UNMIK did not possess the human or financial resources necessary to take sufficient action on this and other policies (ICG 2003).

³³ This was a common attitude encountered on the ground in Kosovo in this period. Based on Author's observations.

In March 2004 rioting broke out in Kosovo, and the ensuing bitter violence, led by Albanians, targeted minority communities. Though the events that led to and fuelled the March 2004 riots remain shrouded in mystery, they were by-in-large sparked by the drowning of three Albanian children in the river Ibar in Northern Kosovo, who were allegedly chased by Serbs with a dog, and either fell or jumped in to the water to escape, though this was far from ever proven. The drowning coincided with other emotive events at this time. Days before, Albanian veteran groups had organised demonstrations across Kosovo to protest against the arrest of former KLA leaders for war crimes. According to reports, during the demonstrations speakers came close to inciting the crowds to rise up against UNMIK, whilst one speaker suggested that UNMIK's treatment of the former UÇK was risking revolt in the territory (HRW 2004). One local newspaper ran the headline 'UNMIK Beware, [UÇK] will burn you down' at this time (OSCE 2004: 15). Two days before the children drowned, a drive by shooting occurred in the Serbian enclave of Caglavica/Caglavice, which was thought to be ethnically motivated, and which resulted in Serbs blocking the main highway, which runs through the village, out of protest. Thus, when the children drowned, tensions were already running high in the territory. Following emotional reporting describing the children's deaths, Albanian protestors (many of them students from Prishtinë/Priština university) began marching to Caglavica/Caglavice to confront protesting Serbs, resulting in violent clashes. In the subsequent days, the violence spread across Kosovo, and an estimated 51,000 people participated in the rioting, resulting in the burning of around 550 homes, damage of 27 Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries, and the displacement of more than 4,000 Serbs and other minorities (HRW 2004: 2). Nineteen people (eight Serbs and eleven Albanians) were killed, and over a thousand wounded, including KFOR soldiers and UNMIK police officers, alongside Kosovo Police Service (KPS) officers (HRW 2004: 7).

The March 2004 violence was fundamentally an outpouring of Albanian frustration regarding the lack of progress in resolving Kosovo's final status and the on-going influence of Belgrade over Kosovo's Serbian majority areas, where parallel institutions were in existence alongside the payment of 'double salaries' to Serbs; activities which served to undermine Kosovo's institutions. Albanians were exasperated by a lack of progress being made to tackle Kosovo's stagnant economy and chronic unemployment rate, which contrasted with the opulence of the international mission. In such an atmosphere, the violence was unsurprising, and though it has been ubiquitously labelled 'ethnically motivated', it was fuelled as much by frustration as it was by ethnic hatred, although

minorities were the targets of the attacks. At the same time, the fervency with which these attacks took place revealed the lingering bitterness amongst Albanians towards Serbs. The riots resulted in an upsurge of negativity towards Albanians by external actors (Mason & King 2006; ICG 2004), and the events seriously undermined trust between members of communities within Kosovo. A common sentiment expressed by minorities at this time, however, was that through this violence Albanian's had 'shown their true colours'³⁴.

Two weeks after the March violence, the 'Standards before Status' policy became operational, however the spirit of this policy was severely compromised (ICG 2011). Following two reports submitted to the Security Council by Norwegian Ambassador to NATO Kai Eide urging progress (amidst fears that delay could result in destabilisation), a status process was launched in 2005, headed by the former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari. In April 2005 the Contact Group³⁵ excluded the partition of Kosovo or its union with any other country (i.e. Albania) in its status resolution, and Ahtisaari specified a number of guiding principles under which any status decision should be made. Among these it was specified that the process of implementing Steiner's benchmarks should continue, and that an international presence was to remain in the territory to monitor the implementation of the standards³⁶.

Following negotiations between delegations from Belgrade and Prishtinë/Priština, Ahtisaari presented a proposal allowing Kosovo to achieve 'supervised independence'. As the terms of the proposal unfolded, however, it became clear that independence came at a price for the Albanian population and their enduring aspiration of a Kosovo free from Serbian rule. Ahtisaari proposed a policy of decentralisation allowing Kosovo's remaining Serbs to be united under Serb-majority municipalities, with municipalities being granted a host of governing powers. Five new Serb-majority municipalities were established, alongside expansion of one other. Crucially, the proposal granted these municipalities the right to cooperation with the Serbian government and institutions through partnership agreements. This included a guarantee that Serbia could send funding to municipalities. Ahtisaari argued that this was the only way to ensure the active participation of Serbs in Kosovo's public life, and to promote multi-ethnicity.

³⁴ This was a response I often heard at this time amongst Serbs and other minorities.

³⁵ A grouping of representatives from international countries charged with coordinating efforts in the Balkans

³⁶ Later it was decided that the UN Standards be absorbed into a European Partnership with Kosovo.

The reaction to the Ahtisaari proposal in Kosovo was mixed. In part ‘status fatigue’ had set in due to the lack of progress, thus a degree of optimism accompanied the proposal. Stronger reactions came from those who warned that Serbia was simply continuing its historical policy of exerting control over Kosovo by whatever means possible, and argued that Belgrade’s concern lay not with the wellbeing of the Serbian population, but with its own territorial aspirations. For example, observed during negotiations was the fact that Belgrade prioritized strategies for maintaining control over areas of Kosovo rather than discussion protection of minority rights (Weller 2008: 672). Commentators from within Kosovo argued vehemently that Kosovo was in danger of becoming another Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite these objections, in accordance with Ahtisaari’s proposal, Kosovo made its (second) declaration of independence in February 2008.

It must be emphasized here that it was not only the March 2004 violence that undermined peace in this period. The feeling of limbo created by the delay in resolving final status had a destructive impact on ethnic relations at the grassroots. Serbs and other minorities continued to repeat the mantra that were Kosovo to become independent, it would result in a mass exodus from their communities and thus there was very shaky ground on which to strengthen or build ties between members of communities at all levels. Had Kosovo’s independence been facilitated earlier it would have created a more productive atmosphere for deepening peace at this level. As it was, Serbs in Kosovo looked steadfastly to Belgrade for guidance in all their affairs, uncertain as to what the future held. Despite the gloomy predictions, following the declaration of independence, no mass exodus of minorities occurred. In some cases, independence resulted in a new sense of security within minority communities that had not existed since prior to the NATO intervention³⁷.

Albanian leadership and post-war violence

A challenge Kosovo has faced in transitioning towards a deeper more positive peace stems also from the struggles and weakness within the Albanian leaderships itself. Following the end of the war, solidarity amongst Albanians dissipated; replaced by a fractured political scene beleaguered by bitter rivalries. As Anna Di Lellio points out, in the years following the war, violence remained an important factor in Kosovo society, ‘but it was more connected with settling scores among rival political groups (...) than with ethnic cleansing’ (2005:62).

³⁷ This observation is based upon my own experience of interacting with members of these communities both before and following the declaration of independence. The extent to which this sentiment has endured, particularly following unsettling events during 2011, remains to be seen.

Immediately following intervention, the Serbian administrative structures collapsed and Hashim Thaçi (head of the UÇK political unit) declared himself self-styled Prime Minister of Kosovo, forming a provisional government dominated by UÇK members, which existed for some months before being dissolved by UNMIK. However, from the outset, the international community consistently supported former UÇK leaders including UÇK General and chief of staff, Agim Çeku, and former Commander Ramush Haradinaj, alongside Thaçi. The reason for this backing of, to quote Mark Wolfgram's (2008) article of the same name, 'Men with Guns' was in part due to such actors being perceived as potential 'spoilers' of the international mission, thus appeasing them was aimed at smoothing transition. Further to this, UÇK, having cooperated with NATO during the war, was viewed as its collaborator and a debt was seen as owed to its leaders by Western officials.

Madeleine Albright's spokesman and adviser, James Rubin, is also understood to have had a close relationship with such leaders (O'Neill: 2002). One UN official reported that,

The Americans told us that we must deal with Thaçi and Çeku, that these are 'our boys' and to forget about Rugova because he is a drunk (O'Neill 2002: 46-7).

Following the war, UÇK members swiftly claimed monopoly over businesses, property and positions in institutions (on the grounds that they had fought for Kosovo's 'freedom') creating resentment and fear amongst sections of the wider population. SRSG Bernard Kouchner attempted to absorb former UÇK fighters into a legitimate non-military unit – 'the Kosovo Protection force' (Trupat e Mbrojtjes së Kosovës) or TMK - dubbed a 'civilian emergency service', which was largely unarmed, and UÇK agreed to surrender 10,000 weapons (a small number for a force of more than 25,000) and to dissolve its own structures (Clark 2002: 7). Headed by Agim Çeku, it is clear however that - whatever the short term benefits - the TMK actually helped elements of the UÇK maintain their networks and arms, and carry out various acts of violence and intimidation (see IWPR 2005). Following the end of the war, rivalries emerged between factions loyal to UÇK and those who had served under FARK. The 'Dugagjini case' is one such example, whereby international judges convicted UÇK general Daut Haradinaj and other UÇK members for torturing and killing FARK members in 2002. The case led to one of the witnesses being shot dead (IWPR 2005). Likewise, in 2003, the head of FARK, Tahir Zemaj, having been allegedly ordered out of Kosovo by Thaçi in 1999, was assassinated following his return to Kosovo (IWPR 2005).

The negative impact of the international community's collusion with violent factions was that it side-lined more moderate and arguably able leaders from the political scene (O'Neill 2002: 47), whilst failing to undermine a culture of militancy and intimidation or to facilitate a process whereby UÇK may be encouraged to tackle its own unsavoury past, in pursuit of a more profound peace. As Clark (2009: 289) points out, members the UÇK essentially 'undid' some of the gains of civil resistance movement, particularly as it was the only armed body that stood a chance of stopping 'revenge violence' - yet its members played a leading role in the expulsion of Serbs. The LDK succeeded in winning both the 2000 municipal and the 2001 Kosovo Assembly election - proving that Rugova was still the politician most trusted by Kosovo Albanian - however, the killing of three key LDK advisers had severely undermined the party's dynamism (Clark 2009: 284). Without the support of such figures, Rugova was an increasingly weak leader.

In 2007, Thaçi's Democratic Party of Kosovo (Partia Demokratike e Kosovës) or PDK won the elections, however the PDK has faced persistent criticism for corruption and criminality since it came to power. In a poll in 2007, the majority of those surveyed amongst Kosovo's population viewed Kosovo's institutions as corrupt (EWS 2007). Those close to the government are thought to have profited from post-war privatisation initiatives, including the Thaçi family who in 2000 was found to be in possession of a large sum of money, apparently as a result of dealings with a Canadian construction firm working in Kosovo (Michael Pugh 2005: 62). This lack of transparency concerning Kosovo's affairs has undermined the population's trust in Kosovo's institutions. In 2010, twenty-nine political groups registered for the parliamentary election, putting forward a total of 1,265 candidates for seats in Kosovo's Assembly (Balkan Insight 2010), only to be beaten by PDK in 2010 amidst allegations of election fraud.

Justice and dealing with the past

As discussed earlier, justice and peace are perceived as going hand in hand (Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse 2011). Without bringing at least a modicum of a *sense of justice* to individuals, a process whereby people feel comfortable or open to living together will be stalled - be that in the context of coexistence, or as part of a more idealised vision of reconciliation. At the political level, failure amongst leaders to administer apologies or acknowledgement of wrongdoing undermines a normalization of relationships at national and regional levels (Rothberg 2006).

Immediately following the war, UNMIK failed to initiate a process of war crimes trials within Kosovo, and the first Serb accused of serious war crimes was not arrested until almost one year after the war. By Spring 2001 only around 40 Serbs had been arrested (Clark 2002: 8). This rendered all Serbs who remained in Kosovo potential suspects in the minds of Albanians, although those who committed the worst crimes are largely believed to have fled at the end of the war (Clark 2002) – at least from central Kosovo. National trials were initiated in Serbia to try those responsible for crimes in Kosovo, alongside trials in Kosovo, overseen by international judges due to what was identified as a lack of impartiality and willingness amongst indigenous justice actors (See UNDP 2006). However, these efforts have been slow and far from wide reaching. Attempts to retrieve information on the fate of missing persons and to return their bodies has been particularly slow-moving – with around 3000 persons thought to have been unaccounted for at the end of the war, and a remaining 1700 today (CRPD 2010).

Whilst the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) indicted a number of high profile individuals accused of war crimes and human rights violations in Kosovo - from both the Serbian side, and amongst members of UÇK - this largely failed to bring a *sense of justice* to local people. This reflects the observation made in other contexts whereby criminal tribunals are too far removed from local populations for their outcomes to positively impact victims (Stover & Weinstein 2004). In Kosovo, the Tribunal tended not to address individual cases, but tried those held responsible at the top level for the crimes. However, a positive impact of the ICTY has been the role it has played in establishing facts surrounding the crimes.

The ICTY generated a degree of bitterness and denial at the grassroots, where it is viewed amongst Serbs as ‘anti-Serb’ (UNDP 2006). Albanians resented the indictment of UÇK leaders, reflecting a wider unwillingness amongst Albanians to tackle their own unsavoury past (Clark 2002). Cases of witness intimidation and assassination of Albanians who stood to testify against former UÇK fighters revealed the lengths to which UÇK stalwarts were willing to go in order to conceal wartime deeds. Many former UÇK superiors, now involved in Kosovo’s political scene, continued to promote nationalist discourses in the public sphere, and this have severely undermined the possibility of sincere transitional justice measures being implemented since the war (Visoka 2012). However, without a genuine admission of acknowledgement and responsibility from the Serbian side –who were irrefutably the dominant aggressor – the likelihood of any Albanian leadership beginning a concerted effort to tackle their own wartime misdemeanours seems remote. This is partly because such a

move would undermine their position - in relationship to Serbia as well as undermining their popular support in Kosovo. This was particularly the case in relation to Serbia during the 'limbo years' prior to the declaration of independence.

Civil Society efforts aimed at dealing with the past have largely revolved around the activities of small local victim's groups, lobbying for information and justice. However, in 2006 the Humanitarian Law Centre established a regional commission (RECOM), which seeks to establish facts about war crimes and other serious human rights violations committed in Former Yugoslavia. In Kosovo RECOM has facilitated dialogue between relevant actors including victim's associations, Human Rights NGOs and the media. It seeks also to persuade regional governments to support initiatives aimed at dealing with the past. In Pristina, the local group, Centre for Research, Documentation and Publication (CRDP), advocates for victims who feel let down by justice mechanisms, whilst RECOM continues to lobby for a truth and reconciliation commission in the region³⁸.

As CRDP point out, there continues to be a need in Kosovo to develop 'objective memory' and to construct a history of Kosovo that dispels the two opposing victim-only myths (CRPD 2010). The absence of transitional justice measures within Kosovo has both prolonged the suffering of victims, whilst also stalling a process of deepening coexistence.

Daily life, divisions, and the process of returns

Kosovo's citizens remained in a limbo state from the end of the war to the declaration of independence in 2008, one that continues today. Whilst millions of aid dollars poured into the region with the goal of maintaining stability, little visible progress was made in terms of stimulating the economy, or in the fields of education or health. Almost one third of the economy relies on contributions from diaspora and on foreign aid, whilst a large proportion of the population is in receipt of social assistance (World Bank 2007:28).

The average monthly wage of an Albanian doctor in 2004 was €200, whilst for a teacher it was €120 (UNMIK 2006)³⁹ and schools have continued to operate on shift systems due to overcrowding and limited resources. Infant mortality has remained by far the highest in Europe (Percival & Sondorp 2010), and since the war Kosovo's archaic electricity system

³⁸ See e.g. Balkan Insight (2011) 'Balkan Leaders Given Truth and Reconciliation Petition' <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/recom-hands-over-petition-to-balkan-top-officials>

³⁹ In 2010 the government announced pay rises for public sector staff causing controversy with the IMF who argued that such a move was unsustainable. See E.g. Balkan Insight (2010) 'Kosovo Pay Hikes Put IMF Deal At Risk'.

has caused frequent and lengthy power cuts, as it can no longer be subsidised by Serbian power. The unemployment rate remained chronic (World Bank 2007). All of these factors have contributed to a high level of frustration across all communities in Kosovo, whilst amongst Albanians the sentiment prevailed that following a long struggle, a brutal war, and the initial post-war euphoria, no golden era had arrived.

Serbian communities have faced significant hardship since the war, characterised by few to no opportunities for young people in the enclaves where they lived, on-going security threats particularly in Northern Kosovo and in and around Mitrovicë /Mitrovica, and restricted freedom of movement throughout Kosovo. Serbs and other minorities have felt unsafe accessing Albanian run medical facilities, and thus have made long journeys to access health care in Serbian areas or Serbia itself (Bloom, J.D et al. 2007). Poverty amongst the Serbian population is reported as being at a higher rate than amongst Albanians (Bhaumik, Gang & Yun 2005: 5). Policies made in Belgrade has continued to dominate the daily life of Serbs in enclaves, with the education system largely overseen by Serbian institutions, and the existence of parallel structures. For example, following Kosovo's independence, in May 2008, Belgrade extended the Serbian local elections to Kosovo, in order to bolster its 'parallel municipalities' in the country. Serbs loyal to Belgrade encompassing radical factions, continues to exert often covert, divisive, and at times violent, control over the local Serbian population, who are subsequently restricted from engaging in what might otherwise be beneficial activities associated with alignment with Kosovo's central administration and mainstream civil society.

Serbs and Albanians have remained largely divided both physically (i.e. geographically) and ideologically, since the war. In the years immediately following international intervention this was down to a severe security threat, which saw minority communities guarded by KFOR⁴⁰. Over the years, as the tensions have eased, communities have continued more or less to live a parallel, yet divided, existence. Whilst in 2002 Clark (2002: 3) reported that 'it remains unsafe to speak Serbian in the streets of Prishtinë/Priština and most other towns in Kosovo', by 2008, the speaking of Serbian was tolerated in Prishtinë/Priština by Albanians, whilst in the south-eastern town of Gjilan/Gnjilane for example, Serbs have been regularly travelling in and out of the city from outlying villages for some years for a weekly market.

⁴⁰ For example, in February 2001 a convoy of buses carrying Serbs came under attack, but under KFOR protection came under attack. One bus was blown up and 11 people died in the attack. Other cases like this occurred in the first years following the end of the war (Mason & King 2006: 97- 98).

Because of geographic and language divisions (alongside political and conflict factors), school children in Kosovo have continued to be taught separately.

It is important to understand inter-ethnic relations since the war regionally. For example, areas of Kosovo such as Drenicë/Drenica (birthplace of the Kaçaks⁴¹ and UÇK/PDK stronghold) have traditionally existed as mono-ethnic Albanian regions, where there has been little to no reason for ethnic groups to interact in such places for decades. Likewise, the municipality of Istog/Istok in North-western Kosovo currently has a 1.11% population of Serbs (estimated at around 504 people out of a population of over 44,000)⁴², a rate that has only moderately shifted since the war (OSCE 2008). However, in the town of Lipjan/Lipljan, or in areas of South-Eastern Kosovo for example, it is possible to find examples of members of communities quietly observing good and co-operative neighbourly relations. One article published by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) in 2005 captured some such experiences, as Berisha et al (2005) explain:

Pointing to his physical proximity to his Serbian neighbour, Ramush Latifi, 54, a driver from the village of Kmetovc, said, “You see this wall? This is the only thing separating my house from Stojko’s – nothing else.” His neighbour, Stojko Totic, 74, a pensioner, said cordial relations between their two families dated back at least a hundred years. “In our village, Serbs and Albanians always lived together with mutual respect,” Totic said. “I don’t know what it is like in other villages” (IWPR 2005).

Experience of ethnic relations are therefore highly localized (Devic 2006), and whilst the overall pattern of ethnic relations has been one of separation antagonized by contemporary events, it *is* possible to encounter stories of sustained Albanian and Serbian cooperation in Kosovo, particularly amongst the older generation, and where common needs prevail (a concern I return to in Chapter 5).

Divisions between communities have been exacerbated by tensions arising from the perceived prioritization of the rights of minorities over those of Albanians by the international community (see Mertus 2004). Following the war, in a bid to foster a viable atmosphere for Serbs in Kosovo at a time when they were under pressure to leave, UNMIK created positions specifically for them, and this resulted at times in Serbian medical and teaching staff being paid to carry out their jobs simultaneously by UNMIK and by Belgrade, thus creating a perception of unfairness. Mertus (2004) argues that following the war Serbs

⁴¹ Kaçaks were a band of Albanian rebels who resisted Serbia’s takeover Kosovo at the end of the Ottoman era.

⁴² See OSCE (2008) ‘Isok/Istog 2008’

were essentially perceived as the new victims, which created considerable resentment amongst Albanians.

Further resentment across communities has arisen over property disputes and the returns process. Following the end of the war, on return to Kosovo, members of all communities found their properties illegally occupied, leading to struggles and bitter disputes which often lasted for months or years before rightful owners could reclaim their houses. This in turn fostered bitterness between communities.

A concerted effort to return minorities displaced from Kosovo during the war was set in motion from 2002. However, this process was impeded by the top-down manner in which it was implemented and by insufficient support at leadership and local levels to enable the process to proceed unimpeded. Widespread resentment amongst Albanians concerning the returns process was a result, as much as anything, of local people simply not being ready to see those associated with the 1999/2000 violence returning to central Kosovo. The limbo created by unresolved final status also blighted the returns process, as the issue of returns became highly politicised. Albanians also resented the payments and resources minorities received from the international community as incentives to return. A lack of knowledge and expertise at the level of UNMIK (alongside some good initiatives, which came too late: such as forming local councils to oversee the returns) also severely undermined this process.

Key Conflict Factors

Summarized below are some of the key conflict factors in Kosovo, which have stalled the process of moving towards positive peace.

Key Conflict Factors		Table 5
Factor	Impact	
Limbo created by unresolved final status	Stalled normalization of relationships at the grassroots. Created a political atmosphere at the grassroots. Widespread frustration. Played a role in causing March violence.	
Violent Factions in Power	Side lined more moderate leaders from the political scene. Undid the gains of civil resistance, undermined culture of human rights. Generated fear (widespread) and divisions (in-group). Stalled transitional justice. Undermined deepening of coexistence/reconciliation.	
Absence of transitional justice measures within Kosovo	Continuation of opposing 'victim-only' myths. Prolonged suffering of victims. Undermined deepening of coexistence/reconciliation.	
Divided communities (ideologically & geographically)	Prevented a normalization of relations at the grassroots. Atmosphere of bitterness over returns process/perceived championing of minority rights.	

Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided an overview of Kosovo's history, giving the reader an understanding of how Kosovo arrived at the point of war in 1998. I have shown here that the roots of the present day conflict can be traced in part back to the events following the break up of the Ottoman Empire, which resulted in the forced integration of Kosovo into Serbia. However, it is essentially how events from the past, including the distant past, have been remembered in more recent times in order to bolster nationalist agendas and to assert territorial claims, that is of greatest significance to this thesis. Deep-rooted attitudes about 'the other' are not only the result of the recent war, but of 'memories' of past defeats, which have been brought alive in the present.

Also examined here is the way in which Tito's efforts to brush the inter-ethnic grievances of the first half of the 20th Century under the carpet as he pursued his vision of a multi-ethnic Yugoslavia were demolished following his death in 1980. Tito's death was followed by an unleashing of nationalist sentiment, which came after a period of increased autonomy and

empowerment of the Albanian population in Kosovo. With the rise of Milosevic, Albanians entered a period of intense oppression, which led to armed uprising and outright war. In understanding the contemporary grassroots peace building efforts examined in this thesis, it is helpful therefore to grasp something of the history of interethnic relations, in terms of understanding where divisions come from, and where the potential lies for coexistence.

In the second part of this chapter, I have provided an overview of the post-war context into which the international community leapt, embarking on its ambitious peace building mission. I have pointed out the vastness of international mission, the way in which a period of limbo ensued following failure to address Kosovo's final status, and the events that led to an outbreak of violence in March 2004. Analysed here also is the post-war political scene, which was dominated by violent factions and disregarded the actors and efforts of the pre-war civil resistance movement.

In providing the reader with a broad picture of the context in which grassroots peace building efforts have taken place, I have presented some of the challenges that Kosovo's population faced following the war. Themes such as the failure to implement justice mechanism and the long period of uncertainty over Kosovo's final status will be picked up again later in this thesis, as we seek to understand barriers local people have encountered when engaging in peace building efforts at the grassroots.

Chapter Four: Interpretations of Peace and Peace building in Kosovo at the Grassroots

Introduction

In this chapter, I present an analysis of the terms peace and peace building, according to how they have been interpreted locally at the grassroots since the war. I argue here that there has been a divergence of attitudes between internal and external actors, and that this has to an extent undermined peace building at this level.

Peace is an ambiguous term in Kosovo because it is open to so many interpretations locally, and this has been particularly true as the threat of physical violence has reduced over time, particularly in areas of central Kosovo. Whilst the term ‘peace’ may have served a useful purpose immediately following the war as a unifying symbol of ‘hope’, peace later came to be seen locally as ‘contaminated’ by political agendas, or as ‘irrelevant’ in the face of the need for development and a ‘normalization’ of people’s everyday lives. Whilst peace has been viewed by some locally through a utopian lens, I argue here that it is external actors who have been most utopian in approaching peace and peace building in Kosovo, in that they have set unrealistic goals, rooted in an inadequate understanding of the local context. For instance, through analysing the experiences of those who lost family members during the war, I show that the insistence of the international community on reconciliation was, if not inappropriate then impractical considering the magnitude of what they had experienced.

From hope to contamination

I begin here by examining how the term peace began as a positive symbol during the initial euphoria which accompanied the end of the war, only to become contaminated by political agendas and stagnated development in Kosovo as time passed.

Peace as hope and unity in Kosovo

In 2001 I visited a Serbian enclave for a community event. Home to around 1200 people, this enclave has a small school, and at the time, a community centre run by a French NGO. Aside from this it is a collection of typical single-storeyed Serbian houses surrounded by

well-kept gardens. On the evening of the event much of the community had gathered in the square to enjoy the performances prepared by local children and youth with the help of the international NGO. Children sang songs and performed plays; and everybody genuinely seemed to be having a good time. Yet, as the event drew to a close, a group of young international volunteers took to the stage and began to sing John Lennon's 'Give Peace a Chance', whilst the local children and youth joined in, fumbling for the English words. Suddenly I felt uncomfortable to be faced with this Western-imported, almost 'hippie' approach to peace - which seemed naive, gauche, and inappropriate considering the magnitude of what people were facing here: the isolation, fear and uncertainty which was very real at this time. This scene came back to me during an interview for this research, when I talked with a young Albanian woman who had been a part of similar volunteer-led activities in this part of Kosovo, which included helping to organise a 'peace festival'. Children had dressed up, had their faces painted, and accompanied by jugglers and street performers, paraded through the town clutching banners adorned with hand-drawn pictures of doves, the words 'peace' and 'love' painted alongside them. I asked her about this approach to peace and peace building: Peace as a message of hope; peace building as singing songs and waving banners; peace as a *sentiment*.

At first she laughed:

"Ha, ha, I remember us doing those peace murals and peace camps (...) We did this parade that was like 'Peace in Peja!'⁴³ I mean what was it about, you know? It was very very naive!"⁴⁴

Seeing the ridiculousness of it all she asked herself if these actions were all futile, naive and empty, however, on reflection she concluded that they weren't, explaining that, 'it was good again to feel some hope...'. At the same time she recognizes now that the blatant naivety of these actions might have made the older generation in particular feel uncomfortable, whilst identifying that they lacked a longer-term or strategic vision for some sort of tangible change,

"I think for kids it was nice... But how did that look to other people? (...) We were doing a lot of public things, but we didn't really think how that would affect positively, or if it was going anywhere. We didn't think about people's reactions to it."⁴⁵

⁴³ Peja/Peč is a town in Western Kosovo

⁴⁴ Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

⁴⁵ Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

She emphasises however that getting involved in the peace festival at the age of nineteen was valuable personally because it got herself and other young people in the town active and united them around a positive goal (however ill-defined or naive a goal ‘peace’ may have been at this time) and whilst she doesn’t believe that peace comes about through singing songs, she explained that in the early days following the war, peace as a ‘message of hope’ fulfilled an important role by giving children and young people in particular something positive to focus on.

Similarly, another powerful ‘peace as a symbol of hope’ initiative that took place at this time was the ‘Peace Train’, which in 2001, as the result of the efforts of a group of local youth, saw a train travel from one side of Kosovo to the other over 24 hours; passing through both Albanian and Serbian areas. On this train were DJs from both Kosovo and Serbia, alongside citizens from all communities in Kosovo, who danced and partied together, whilst radio stations in different communities followed the events. This was a highly symbolic and striking endeavour, as young people from all communities were seen together literally months after the end of the war. Though the ‘Peace Train’ was not an easy project - the organisers even received death threats in the days leading up to the event - it passed off peacefully and is remembered by citizens in Kosovo as something hugely positive, as one of the organizers behind the initiative explains:

“One of the most memorable times on the peace train, was that after all the fear, once the music and dancing began, a beautiful energy travelled through the train as it weaved its way through the land. As we danced, people were not as we were told ‘angry’. Mostly, they laughed; smiled; waved; danced too! They were so happy to see people dancing. Happy to see life come back to Kosova.”⁴⁶

Peace as a positive symbol and message has also been a factor in uniting feminists groups in the Former Yugoslavia, perhaps most notably Women in Black⁴⁷ (and the Women’s Peace Coalition⁴⁸), both before and following the war. For example, one member of the Women in Black network in Kosovo emphasized in our interview that she was *proud* to call herself a ‘peace activist’. Calling oneself a peace activist, or simply calling for peace in the atmosphere of violence and chauvinism which has dominated contemporary politics in the Former Yugoslavia, is to assert one’s belief in the possibility of a different reality. Arguably

⁴⁶ Interview, 2011, Respondent 10

⁴⁷ Women in Black (WiB) is a women’s feminist - antimilitarist peace organization which began as a protest group in 1991 against the war; and which became highly active in campaigning, supporting local women’s groups, organizing conferences, etc. across the Former Yugoslavia.

⁴⁸ The Women’s Peace Coalition was established by WiB and is forged on women’s solidarity and is engaged in advocacy and lobbying activities in Kosovo

therefore, the notion of peace in Kosovo has represented a certain symbolic, almost 'religious' quality in this way; serving to bind actors together around a common, positive, future alternative. As the Women's Peace Coalition states:

Different from official politics, the Women's Peace Coalition continues to work towards building trust, solidarity and mutual support. Our joint activities contribute to the construction of *true and long-term peace* in the region (Women's Peace Coalition 2007: 3 emphasis mine).

The examples given above, which illustrate how the term peace has been positively construed in Kosovo, challenge some of the more negative assumptions about peace expressed by scholars and activists. For example, we see that in this context it was exactly the 'vague, idealistic, emotional flavour' of peace abhorred by Curle (1972: 1), which appealed to children and young people in particular immediately following the war, and this has also been the case amongst some feminist actors. Actions like the Peace Train and peace festivals reflect Boulding's analysis that peace must be built upon the capacity to imagine something different, without which space cannot be given to foster positive change. As Boulding explains, 'how could we work to bring about something we could not even see in our imaginations?' (Boulding 1999: no page number). Imagining a different more positive future also necessitates taking risks, as the organizer behind the Peace Train explains,

"The point I want to make is that what people don't understand about war is it's imposed and the moment people take a risk - to love again; to laugh; to play; to create - this energy is so different, so totally opposite (...) we forget how it can completely dissolve fear."⁴⁹

Unlike what might be expected, peace in Kosovo following the war was rarely interpreted by local people at the grassroots as the need to establish 'peaceful relationships' (at least not voluntarily). Rather, with the exception perhaps of the early efforts of Don Lush Gjerji to establish multi-ethnic schools, what took precedence amongst local actors, and this is illustrated in the examples above also, was the pursuit of peaceful 'spaces', however temporary. In Kosovo, people's surroundings, particularly in Western Kosovo where some of these activities took place, were drastically and negatively transformed by violence. Volkan suggests that one need not become *physically* dislocated from one's environments in order to become a 'refugee'; rather one becomes an 'exile' within one's physical environment when it is drastically altered by violence, and when physical surroundings

⁴⁹ Interview, 2011, Respondent 10

metamorphose into triggers that bring back painful associations with the war (2006: 82 - 83). During the war in Kosovo, and leading up to it, Albanian citizens lost control over their surroundings, particularly in places most affected by the fighting, as houses were burned and buildings were adapted to support warfare. In this sense, through the actions described above, Albanians sought to affect an informal 're-claiming of space', a similar kind to that which has been facilitated also in neighbourhoods around the world affected by urban violence and gang warfare (see e.g. Breitbart, 1995). Through the Peace Train and peace festivals, individuals re-claimed space from a physical perspective - as children and youth moved through geographical spaces asserting their vision of a new reality - but also on a psychological level, through the transmission of positive messages and symbols which attempted to pervade negative feelings internalized by the violence⁵⁰.

This item has been removed for data protection reasons. The unabridged version of the thesis can be viewed at the Lanchester Library, Coventry University.

Photograph 2: Video Still from the 'Peja Peace Parade', Kosovo 2001

⁵⁰ These findings relate also to an emerging discourse from the Palestine-Israel context examining 'Counter spaces', for example at checkpoints. Whilst the contexts are different (Kosovo was in a period of post-war euphoria, Palestine is under occupation) there are interesting commonalities. See e.g. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevekian (2009) 'Checkpoints and Counter Spaces'.

This item has been removed for data protection reasons. The unabridged version of the thesis can be viewed at the Lanchester Library, Coventry University.

Photograph 3: Video Still from the ‘Peja Peace Parade’, Kosovo 2001

A Contaminated Peace

The embracing of peace by the Albanian community in this way reflects also the optimism that was felt following the war, both amongst Kosovo Albanians (the long night of Serbian domination was over), and international leaders (because a precedent-setting war needed a successful conclusion), and this was matched by the abundance of international funds for ‘anything peace’. However, such positive assertions about peace in Kosovo had their limits. Whilst initially in Kosovo peace united, activated, and inspired people within the Albanian community, this was somewhat fleeting, as the desire quickly arose for strategies leading to long-term tangible change. Crucially also, the power peace had to serve as a positive symbol at the grassroots was much less poignant within Serbian communities, where peace was not accompanied by a sense of ‘victory’ or even safety. For Serbs living in less politicized areas than Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, it was possible to think ahead and plan improvements in their life - but only in the context of having the protection of external actors including KFOR. In Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, and the surrounding area of Northern Kosovo, the threat of physical violence remains palpable.

By 2008, considerable cynicism had emerged at the grassroots about the term peace; including amongst those involved in the actions described above. In some cases this can be interpreted as a ‘growing up’ amongst grassroots actors; some of whom exchanged youthful

idealism for a more critical vocabulary. As the respondent involved in the peace festival above explains,

“I was young and I was in that kind of way of thinking...I was an optimist then. Now I feel that I have grown up, and that I am more aware and realistic. Not that you shouldn’t be optimistic...shouldn’t make things happen. But I think it is important that you ask yourself: ‘what are you truly doing, and are you truly helping?’⁵¹

However, this disillusionment corresponds also with the experiences of these actors of the overall involvement of outsider powers and funders in Kosovo, as well as, increasingly as the years passed, Kosovo’s government itself. This young respondent explains,

“The origin of all values or sentiments got corrupted. So we cannot look for an idealist or pure idea of believing in something (...) In our case we have had imposed [on us] the international’s idea of multi-ethnicity...If you want to get a loan from a development agency, you should have a project with a Serbian, etc.”⁵²

This disillusionment about peace, which translated into negative feelings about the term peace building, is a reflection also of the lack of progress observed in Kosovo. As shown in chapter three, ‘normalization’ at the grassroots, beyond the physical restoration of buildings and infrastructure, was slow to materialize: as measured through, for example: employment opportunities; health care services and education; and the opportunity to travel abroad⁵³. Thus, by 2008, talk of peace sounded empty for many, as Kosovo remained ‘frozen’, to quote Kurti, in a ‘crisis of stability’ (2011). Peace began to equal stagnation and seemingly endless international rule, rather than the development people craved, leading to a deeper, more positive peace. This reflects Pouligny’s analysis that when it comes to international peace operations, ‘most interventions think about ‘stability’ when they should think in terms of ‘change’ (Pouligny 2005: 506). Kosovo’s government, and institutions also played a crucial role in cultivating this widespread disillusionment, as, whilst it may have been more *popular* to publicly blame the international community for the many failings that blighted Kosovo’s post-war scene, allegations of corruption within the government, and the blatant nepotism outlined in the previous chapter amongst UÇK associates also played a role in undermining local optimism. The population increasingly found itself trapped between a cumbersome and hegemonic international mission on the one hand, and a weak and corrupt (Visoka & Bolton 2011) leadership which pandered to international demands on the other.

⁵¹ Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

⁵² Interview, 2010, Respondent 12

⁵³ Kosovo has extremely restricted visa regulations imposed upon it. For example they are not a part of the Schengen zone and can only travel freely to a 3 bordering countries alongside Turkey and Haiti.

As we have seen earlier, from the outset, peace was inextricable for Albanians from independence: both because continued Serbian rule was, and still is, deemed a security threat, and because ‘freedom’ (*liria*) from the oppressive other has always been central to the Albanian struggle. This dates back to the historic loss by Albanians of Kosovo in 1912 and its forcible reintegration into Serbia, an event which is kept alive today, by being recalled annually on June 10th. This notion that Albanians have always been struggling for freedom and for the right to self-determination, is rooted in the wider historical narrative, which reinforces Albanian national identity, borrowing from the tales such as that of Skanderbeg whose statue stands in the centre of Prishtinë/Priština (see Chapter 3).

Yet, the move towards independence was painstakingly slow, whilst policies such as ‘Standards before Status’ and on-going negotiations with Serbia were bitter pills to swallow for those who felt that, considering not only had Albanians been legitimately struggling for independence for centuries, but that having lived through the 1990s and the war, independence was not only the logical next step, but what Albanians rightly deserved. Interesting, this sentiment contrasted with that of the early 1990s, when Albanians voluntarily adopted the attitude that independence should be ‘earned’; seen through efforts to end the tradition of blood feuds, for example (however the degree to which this represented a *sentiment* rather than a *strategy* forms part of a larger debate, which is beyond the scope of this thesis).

A deep chasm was exposed between the ‘visionary promises’ made to the people of Kosovo by members of the international community in 1999 (ICG, Dec 1999: i), and the realities on the ground by 2008, including the very serious allegations of corruption concerning Kosovo’s own government, thus the frustration deepened. Policies such as Steniner’s ‘Standards before Status’ (see Chapter three) and other carrot and a stick initiatives hindered peace building at the grassroots by tainting, or ‘contaminating’ the notion of peace through its politicization. Rather than a vision of peace being *owned* or determined by local people, peace became a political hostage, as described by one respondent, cited also in the introduction for his observations on the contamination of ‘holy words’:

“...What we are doing because of different political pressures; because of our brotherhood with different international advisors (...) is contaminating concepts. [They become] highly politicised, and finally it looks like it is not a citizen-friendly process.

Can you imagine the paradox? [People] are refusing something that is for their benefit.

Why? Because the concept is politically contaminated.”⁵⁴

As the pressure exerted by external actors increased on Albanians to reach out to minorities, so minorities doubted that the myriad of ‘peace building projects’ were motivated by a genuine passion to forge ties and build a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. Rather, at the grassroots, peace building initiatives were interpreted cynically amongst many Serbs and Roma as attempts by Albanians to placate the international community in order to achieve independence.

Members of minority communities were invited by Albanians to participate in projects with so-called ‘reconciliation’, and ‘tolerance goals’, however they questioned if their role wasn’t in fact to serve as pawns in the independence game. Controlling agendas such as the standards and the subsequent Artissari package, essentially removed the opportunity for the Albanian population to reach out to minorities *voluntarily*, as such actions became politicalized, as this Albanian respondent further explains here,

“We are making Serbs a kind of political destructive element in Kosovo and this is not good, you know. So you have many of these kinds of examples whereby the political levels destroys the grassroots efforts and normal process...it destroys the normal developments. Also what happened after independence: initially big reaction from Serbs – an inflated one by political actors etc. - and then you had an immediate decrease [in involvement of minorities in peace building activities]. Everybody was like interested (except in North Mitrovica/Mitrovicë) and now you have again a rise of tension because of actions at the political level. (...) This kind of political level is contributing [negatively] to the normal advance of very positive grassroots achievements.”⁵⁵

At the same time, whilst events and policies initiated at the political level certainly tainted activities at the grassroots in the ways described above, it is difficult to know the extent to which Albanian civil society organisations might have voluntarily reached out to minority communities to the extent they did without this external pressure. Whilst seasoned civil society actors bemoaned funding criteria which increasingly stipulated that all projects be ‘multi-ethnic’, and argued (legitimately) that there are other ways to build peace; this outside pressure, which was indirectly a result of policies such as standards before status,

⁵⁴ Interview, 2008, Respondent 15

⁵⁵ Interview, 2008, Respondent 9

probably *did* lead to a much greater involvement of minorities in peace building activities at the grassroots than would otherwise have occurred.

The question is whether the proliferation of cynical attitudes that accompanied this involvement (see also CDA 2006 for evidence of this) undermined the positive impact of these civil society activities. For example, whilst working with youth groups in the city of Gjilan/Gnjilane in south-east Kosovo, I observed Albanian youth urgently seeking Serbian and Roma participants for their activities in order to satisfy funding criteria, hours before activities were to take place (a debate, seminar, or an excursion, for example). In helping them to find participants I felt uneasy, knowing that young Serbs and Roma were only being invited in their capacity to serve as ‘minorities’ and to fulfil funding criteria and not out of a heartfelt desire to forge links between communities. However, without this ‘top-level’ influence such contact might well never have occurred. Whether these multi-ethnic activities had any kind of significant impact on deepening peace in Kosovo is another question, and a concern I address in Chapter 5.

Significant here also is the attitudinal shift that took place amongst external actors towards Albanians following the riots in March 2004, which deepened the divide between local and international actors working for peace at the grassroots. The initial enthusiasm felt amongst internationals to help ‘the poor downtrodden Albanians’ (King & Mason 2006: 19) was replaced following March 2004 with growing doubt. Sensational attitudes and literature circulated amongst internationals at this time, even going as far as to suggest that NATO had ‘bombed the wrong side’ (MacKenzie 2004)⁵⁶. Local grassroots actors saw now, more than ever, the conditionality of international support, and some local organisations lost international funding as punishment for what were interpreted as inappropriate responses to the March events.

One such example of this is can be seen through the events surrounding the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF) following March 2004. As explained in Chapter 3, the CDHRF played a foundational role in the civil resistance movement in the 1990s, functioning as a body recording and publishing accounts of human rights abuses committed against Albanians by Serbian police and others. During the March events, Halit Berani, the chairman of the CDHRF in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, was broadcasted on one of the

⁵⁶ I for one received the MacKenzie article by email following the March 2004 event and this article was circulated amongst international NGOs at this time. My colleagues and myself were privy to many emotional discussions amongst internationals at this time who underwent an attitudinal shift towards Albanians.

main TV channels in Kosovo describing his interpretation of what had led to the children drowning (see Chapter 3). Berani's account was highly emotionally charged, and described 'Serb bandits' who had attacked the children, whilst 'swearing at their Albanian mothers', causing them to jump into the river. Berani stated,

We are used to these Serb bandits.... We think that it is in revenge for what happened in Caglavica [i.e. shooting of a Serb], the case that showed what the Serbs are willing to do when the situation is getting calm in Kosova (OSCE 2004: 10).

Berani's sensational reporting of these events was subsequently blamed for setting off protests across the territory (HRW 2004: 20).

Whilst Berani's emotional outburst - which played a role in inciting violence - was inexcusable, it resulted in an unhelpful and sudden drop in support for the CDHRF by international funders once the violence ceased. This is despite CDHRF being one of the few groups working with minorities in Kosovo since the war, which had also reached out to Serbs in Belgrade (see Clark 2002: 28). The consequence of this reactionary attitude by international actors was that it significantly damaged the trust between local civil society groups and members of the international community. Those international actors who responded negatively to CDHRF following the March events had little comprehension of the influence of CDHRF and of its central position in Albanian civil society.

Another significant case involved the activist, Albin Kurti, who was imprisoned following a nonviolent protest he organised against UNMIK in 2007, which resulted in two Albanian protesters being shot dead by members of the Romanian Forward Police Unit (serving under UNMIK). Despite the police unit being clearly to blame, Kurti was made to serve a two year sentence, some of which was under house arrest⁵⁷. As Clark (2011) explains, Kurti was identified as a dangerous malcontent of the international mission, and as a potential 'spoiler' (a term which in Kosovo has served as an open invitation to those with power to dismiss any critics who try to obstruct the imposition of their policies). Thus his arrest was largely politically motivated. Clark explains,

Whilst the UNMIK police who killed two unarmed demonstrators were not punished, Albin Kurti - the organiser of the demonstration - was put on trial, detained, and generally harassed for the next two years.

The treatment of Kurti by international actors intensified hostility towards UNMIK amongst significant sections of the local population. Kurti is not only a highly respected local activist,

⁵⁷ See Amnesty International (2007) 'A Politically Motivated Prosecution?' for details of this case.

but had been a leader within the student's movement (UPSUP) during the 1990s and was subsequently imprisoned during the war in Serbia. Thus he represents a key symbol of Albanian resistance in Kosovo particularly amongst youth.

Therefore, by 2008, peace and peace building were readily being described by actors at the grassroots in the language of pacification. Peace was perceived as 'stability', and peace building as 'control of the conflict' - i.e. the top-down, hegemonic, and interventionist approach critiqued by Francis (2010: 74). Peace building was seen to be 'conditional' – something that the Albanians were to be judged deserving of or otherwise; thus it was stripped of its more profound qualities. The reduction of peace and peace building in this way disposed it of the virtue that all human beings are worthy of our collective striving for peace, regardless of the circumstances that help shape their predicament.

At the same time, it should also be emphasized that many of the grassroots actors who have come to despise the international hegemony in Kosovo had initially learned the language of 'pacification' *voluntarily* - out of a desire and need to keep their civil society projects afloat by satisfying funding criteria set by international actors. Therefore the peace building as pacification paradigm was unfortunately perpetuated by the grassroots themselves, albeit because they felt they had no other choice, or as some argued, because they didn't know what they were getting themselves into⁵⁸. As the Committee for Conflict Transformation Support (CCTS) has observed,

NGOs in Kosovo learned to speak the approved international language of values and Human Rights, and were rewarded with all sorts of carrots (CCTS, 2006).

Comparisons might be drawn here between what happened to the word 'peace' in Kosovo and Ulrich Beck's analysis of 'Zombie Categories': through which Beck suggests that certain terms become irrelevant as they lose their currency in a changing society. Beck cites: 'family'; 'class'; and 'neighbourhood', as examples, and describes this phenomenon as like 'living with a lot of zombie[s]...which are dead and still alive' (Beck 2002: 203). Likewise, in Kosovo, grassroots actors described the term peace as having had the life 'sucked out of it', through a process of politicization and through general over-use. Though it continues to be employed, it has lost its original symbolism.

Peace at the level of the individual rather than peaceful relationships

Introduction

⁵⁸ Interview, 2011, Respondent 12

Important also to understanding how peace and peace building have been construed at the grassroots, is to explain the dichotomy that exists between the ‘peace as relationships’ approach to peace building favoured by international actors, and the analysis of peace ‘as an individual experience’ as understood by many individuals locally. These observations relate also to the theme of ‘multi-ethnic peace building’, which will be examined in much greater detail in Chapter 5.

Peaceful Relationships through Contact Approach and Reconciliation

Multi-ethnicity has been a major approach to peace building in Kosovo at every level of society, and one that has been led primarily by international actors. Bill Clinton stated that his goal for Kosovo was to ‘restore a multi-ethnic society’ in early 1999 and on Madeleine Albright’s first visit to Kosovo at the end of the war she reinforced this sentiment also by stating that what everybody wanted to see was a multi-ethnic Kosovo (BBC 1999). UNMIK immediately set about establishing a multi-ethnic judicial system and in training and deploying a multi-ethnic police force throughout the province. Similarly, from the outset, OSCE made it clear that its mandate included a strong policy to foster multi-ethnicity and reconciliation in Kosovo:

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo will in its work be guided by the importance of bringing about mutual respect and reconciliation among all ethnic groups in Kosovo and of establishing a viable multi-ethnic society where the rights of each citizen are fully and equally respected (OSCE 1999).

Multi-ethnicity as an approach to peace and peace building at the top level, rippled down to the grassroots, as funders and international partners followed the lead and favoured projects deemed to further this goal. Large numbers of projects were therefore required to adopt a ‘contact approach’ to peace building, as seen through the many multi-ethnic sports tournaments; multi-ethnic community centres; and networks of NGOs working with different communities established in Kosovo, particularly from 2001 onwards. On the whole, peace building at the grassroots in Kosovo became interpreted primarily to mean multi-ethnic/contact approaches to peace.

This interpretation of peace building at the grassroots, was reflected in the attitudes amongst respondents interviewed in this research, who often only spoke about peace building in terms of multi-ethnic projects, or felt they needed to *justify* why activities that didn’t utilize a contact approach might still be classed as peace building. Respondents largely interpreted

the goal of the contact approach to peace building through ‘multi-ethnic projects’ as ‘reconciliation’. For example, one woman interviewed who is very active in the civil society sector (engaged in what one would broadly describe as peace work), confused me by explaining that she did not feel able to partake in peace building. I realized that she perceived peace building solely as bringing parties together as a means to advance reconciliation, and worried that her own involvement in peace building would demand that she partake in reconciliation also. This reflects a phenomenon in Kosovo whereby external actors have often used the terms reconciliation and multi-ethnicity interchangeably, whilst at the same time failing to define what is actually meant by reconciliation.

One example of this can be seen through a project led by the OSCE in 2003 called ‘Dancing for Reconciliation’, which brought young people from different communities together for joint dance workshops⁵⁹. However this and many similar initiatives failed to make explicit: how this reconciliation was taking place; who was reconciling with who; or on what basis, for example. The common assumption projected by external actors was that activities striving for interaction and multi-ethnicity amongst divided communities would automatically lead to reconciliation in itself, and that all these concepts were interchangeable.

The effect of this vast emphasis on a contact approach to peace building in Kosovo through multi-ethnic projects is evaluated both positively and negatively - and I will examine the experiences of those involved in such activities in Chapter 5. However, to summarize here, whilst those engaged in these activities saw the positive side to multi-ethnic peace building projects for their potential to bridge gaps between communities, many negative implications have been identified also. For example, a focus on multi-ethnicity led to missed opportunities, as funders favoured multi-ethnic projects over other valuable endeavours. Respondents universally observed that bringing individuals together in itself is not enough to bridge the great gulfs that divide people in Kosovo. Ultimately, one-off or short-term contact projects achieved very little in terms of long-term relationship building, or reconciliation between communities, an observation made also in the assessment of peace building in Kosovo made by CDA (2008). Factors such as: whether individuals who partook in multi-ethnic initiatives possessed the willingness or ability to look beyond the past in order to work towards creating new relationships; whether the initiatives implemented at the grassroots offered the means to do so; and whether there were seen by citizens to be genuine

⁵⁹ See OSCE (2003) ‘Dancing for Reconciliation’ in *OSCE Newsletter*

advantages in striving towards a multi-ethnic society, are key issues identified by respondents in this research concerning the experiences of those engaged in this approach to peace building. Above all it was emphasized by respondents that the high level of commitment and motivation needed by individuals to forge new relationships across communities was largely overlooked by international actors, who mistakenly believed that bringing people together in itself was enough. As one respondent put it, who has observed many multi-ethnic peace building activities in Kosovo since the war, it was wrongly believed ‘that through this [contact] something almost ‘mystical’ or ‘magical’ was going to happen, which would heal divides.’⁶⁰

Peace as a *Personal* or an *Individual* Experience

Whilst I have highlighted above the emphasis that was placed on relationship-building as a means for achieving peace, here I present the experiences of those who lost loved ones in the war and who continue to live with the pain as a result of what happened. Many such individuals find it almost impossible to separate the notion of peace from that of an inner experience. Those who represent the families of missing people, for example, spoke solely about peace and peace building in terms of seeking justice and solace for the victims. And whilst immediately following the war there were some efforts to address suffering on an emotional level, for example through the creation of women’s centres and counselling programmes (Clark 2002), the effect that grief and loss has on an individual’s capacity to engage with notions of peace and peace building has been largely underestimated in the Kosovo context. The points raised here relate to the larger themes of justice and reconciliations and the role they play in advancing positive peace.

One respondent, a young woman called Lila⁶¹, included in this research and interviewed for her experiences of, and engagement with, activities at the grassroots, also shared her experiences from the war. Lila lost her mother and sister at the end of the war when two paramilitaries entered her village and began randomly shooting at civilians. Lila explains here what happened:

“It was just two days before NATO came in and they just shot. They shot randomly, but then they shot my sister. They were in the room. We weren’t there because we left earlier – we went with the young people to the forest and so my mum and sister were at my neighbour’s house. And three or two of them came in and there were a lot of kids in the room: eighteen people at my neighbour’s house. So they were just shooting

⁶⁰ Interview, 2008, Respondent 11

⁶¹ Not her real name

like this – and oh, they asked for money – but nobody had any. It was the end of the war...and they were just shooting like this. So, my sister got wounded – she was twenty-four – but they were using these really bad bullets so she got shot in the hand but she screamed and then they just shot her. My mum was there...she was still...yeah for me when I think about it now that I'm a mum...it's really painful. When I think that she saw it all happen. And then she got up – she couldn't even sit and she was doing something [gestures with hands]...that is how people who were there tell me because not everybody was killed...just one other girl got killed. She was 11 years old. And they took her to our house [her mum]. We had a burnt house but we still had some things in there and they took the last 20 Euros that we had and they shot her there. (...) And the girl who got killed – my neighbour's daughter – she was 11. She was wounded in her leg but just from bleeding she died. And then they just left.”⁶²

Though ten years have now passed since their deaths and Lila has created a life for herself: getting married; having her own children; and graduating on an international Masters programme; she carries with her, every day, the pain of what happened. She told me, ‘I just want to understand why they did this,’ and speaks of how she, and one of her surviving sisters, consider attempting to track down the young men who committed the crime, ‘So that we could confront them, and ask them what it means to them to have done this.’⁶³ However, Lila is not vengeful, as she explains here,

“It is so weird...because I don't really have this feeling of revenge; that I would want to kill them or anything like that. A lot of time I try to analyse this – and what it really means and what would I really do if I saw them?”⁶⁴

Despite this, it hurts her that these men are walking free and crucially she does not feel able to engage in activities classed as peace building - which she categorises as bringing the two sides of the conflict together - a fact for which she even apologises,

“I'm a peaceful person...But I don't really feel that I want to work in peace building.... I'm not just going to embrace everybody like ‘come!’ I need some distance.”⁶⁵

When Lila identifies herself as a peaceful person she does so to show that she is not an advocate of violence.

Lila, like many others across Kosovo who suffered such a loss, is primarily concerned with coming to terms with her own pain; attaining her own degree of inner peace. Though

⁶² Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

⁶³ Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

⁶⁴ Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

⁶⁵ Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

intellectually she works hard to make sense of what has happened in her life, her process of inner healing is on going. This re-enforces Kraybill's (2006) analysis concerning the battle that occurs between heart and head amongst people affected by war, and of 'heart reconciliation' whereby Kraybill identifies an internal split between 'rational' and 'emotional' reactions to violence and loss, which is often ignored by external actors, as has been the case in Kosovo. Lila explains,

"It is really complicated the whole idea of reconciliation and peace and what it means. So many times I went through all these different emotions about it. Because yes, on one side I am very open about it and I'm definitely not closed off to things happening and I really do not judge all Serbs and I know the context. (...) It's weird because I was thinking one day about the whole thing of forgiveness: *forgive but not forget*. I would never forget. I feel like I don't even have the right to do that. Who gave me the authority even to forgive them? It's not me that lost her life – my mum and sister were killed and I feel like I wouldn't dare to do this to them - because it was them who lost their lives. So in that way this whole slogan of forgive...even for me...I feel like I can't forgive even for the pain they have caused me. Let alone the fact that I don't feel that it does justice to them [those who died] to forgive them."⁶⁶

Lila's experience returns us to the themes of justice and reconciliation, as for Lila and many others the lack of action taken to investigate war crimes represents a significant barrier to both engagement in peace building activities, and in advancing a personal process of inner healing (which relates to the notion of 'internalized injustice', described earlier in this thesis). Lila emphasizes that too little has been done to investigate events during the war, and to bring those responsible to justice - echoing the broader analysis of justice given in Chapter 3. At the same time she feels that herself and others are being urged to reconcile - both from the perspective *reconciling oneself with one's fate* (Rigby 2006: 5), and to reconciling with what amounts to an obscure and ill-defined 'enemy'.

Further to the experiences shared by Lila above, there is possibly no better illustration in Kosovo of the need for peace to be understood from the perspective of bringing relief to individuals and in addressing their needs, than the case of Krusha e Vogël. Krusha is a small village in Southern Kosovo where on the 26th March 1999 a massacre occurred in which 112 men and boys between the ages of 13 and 77 were killed, representing 70% of the male population. In the process of carrying out this research I visited and spoke with

⁶⁶ Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

residents of Krusha e Vogël, alongside those who have been involved in supporting the village since the war. Here Agron Limani, who runs the association '26 March 1999' which seeks justice on behalf of the relatives, explains what happened in the village:

On 25th March 1999, at about 4 o'clock in the morning, police forces consisting of military and paramilitary Serbians arrived near our village together with tanks, artillery units, armoured cars, etc. These forces marched through the village joined by Serbian villagers and started to burn the first houses. Seeing what was happening, the Albanian villagers went to a large house on the very edge of the village, hoping that they would be able to return to their homes after the Serbians had finished their operation. On the following day (26th March), at midday, Serbians of our village together with other forces from Prizren, surrounded civilian Albanians in the house where they had crowded together. They instructed the women and the children under 12 years old to go to Albania, but the other people were obliged to remain under arrest. The mothers and wives begged the local Serbians, who had been their neighbours the day before, to free the others but they were aggressive towards the women. A lot of children were forcefully separated from their mothers at this time. After the children and the women were ordered out of the village, old people, husbands, youths and children above 13 years old were all told to go towards another house. After the Serbs had stolen their possessions and taken their documents, they ordered them into the house. Serbians started to shoot into the crowd with automatic arms. After that, they burnt the house with the dead inside, but there were many who were wounded and were burned alive. Those that were not seriously wounded lay as if dead, but seeing what was happening, got up and started to run away. Some of those too were killed.⁶⁷

As a consequence of this massacre, the village has been left with 82 widows and 145 orphans⁶⁸.

Despite the severity of what occurred in Krusha e Vogël, and significant media attention surrounding this case⁶⁹, those directly responsible for the crimes have not been brought to justice. In 2003, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (also known as the

⁶⁷ This account is taken and abridged from a document provided by Agron Limani, summarising the events in Krusha e Vogël. This document was presented by Limani to investigators from The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). See also CSCE (2003) 'Missing Persons in Southeast Europe hearings before the commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe' for details of this case.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ See e.g. SEE Times (2008) 'Kosovo village's widows and orphans still struggling' http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/articles/2008/11/10/reportage-01; The British journalist John Sweeney also made a documentary on this case for Panorama, and events surrounding the massacre have been recorded in the Human Right Watch publication 'War Crimes in Kosovo' (2001:364).

U.S. Helsinki Commission or CSCE), recorded testimonies from the witnesses and survivors of the Krusha e Vogël massacre, alongside the names of those killed or missing and the alleged perpetrators: many of whom are identifiable by the surviving villagers as they had previously been their neighbours. Two survivors of the massacre, Lutfi Ramadani and Mehmet Krasniqi, both testified at the ICTY in Hague in high profile hearings against Milošević and others held responsible for crimes in Kosovo, however this has not brought a sense of justice to the victims. As Agron Limani points out, those who are in The Hague now, ‘are not accused for Krusha e Vogël, but for crimes in Kosova’⁷⁰.

The impact of this lack of justice on the mothers and wives of those who died is compounded by the fact that most of the bodies of those who lost their lives on that day have never been found. Thus, over the years many relatives clung to the hope that their loved ones were amongst those who escaped and were being held in Serbian prisons. When the villagers returned to Krusha from Albania after the war they searched for graves and 11 bodies were found in and around the village, whilst further bodies were found dumped in a water-channel 25 kilometres from the village. These bodies appear to have been exhumed from Krusha a short time after they were buried as a measure to cover their assassins’ tracks. In total, 22 people from the village have been buried, whilst the bodies of the remaining 91 are missing⁷¹. As a result of the on-going uncertainty that surrounds their fate, Agron Limani described the states of mind of the bereaved mothers, and wives of those who died as, ‘weighed down by the grief that they carry.’⁷² He explains,

“For these families there is no stabilisation. They are not stable in fact. They are living in this kind of trauma situation. The people here...they are not normal...not like other people.”⁷³

Limani emphasises that without proper burials the relatives remain trapped in a painful state of limbo,

“If one family member is still missing, it means that the family is still paining. It is a kind of suffering. Of course it doesn’t mean that if they were buried, their families would not have pain, but it would be lighter for them. In our village, I have observed that most of the families have been living in a kind of trauma everyday. OK, so they

⁷⁰ Interview, 2009, Respondent 32. This viewpoint was echoed by others representing the families of the missing, for example, Respondents 33.

⁷¹ Report provided by Agron Limani, taken from evidence presented to the ICTY. An additional child died on return to the village as a result of a landmine, thus is included in this figure alongside the massacre victims, bringing the total killed up to 113.

⁷² Interview, 2009, Respondent 32

⁷³ Interview, 2009, Respondent 32

think ‘now we are sure that our family members are killed’, but they have no sign, they have no bones to come to a state where finally they are calm, they are quiet, where there is some sort of closure.”⁷⁴

The experience Lila and of the relatives of the missing in Krusha e Vogël add further weight to the argument that peace and justice are not exclusive alternatives (Miall, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse 2011). It raises important questions about the need to re-evaluate the sorts of activities prioritised as ‘peace building’ in Kosovo, and to assess whether building peace through relationships doesn’t overlook the need to address peace at an ‘individual’ or ‘inner’ level. Through interviewing people like Lila, and visiting the places most effected by the war, it became clear that insisting upon peace - and crucially the notion of building peace through *relationships* - with those who suffered a personal loss is at best unhelpful, and at worst insulting. Whilst the relationship-building approach to peace building was wholeheartedly favoured in Kosovo amongst international actors because it was seen to further certain agendas (standards, independence, ‘reconciliation’ and multi-ethnicity), it constituted an imposition for those who were not ready or willing to embrace such an approach, whilst exposing the chasm that exists between what external actors in Kosovo would like to see happen, and what has been viable or appropriate at the grassroots considering the experiences of the local population.

One respondent - a long-term observer of peace building at the grassroots in Kosovo - provided the following analysis,

“The problem with peace building and how peace has been understood here is that it has been imposed. Values don’t work well if they have been imposed: it’s an anachronism. A lot of people in the third sector world or NGO community don’t understand that. They get so wrapped up in their own mission – their own *raison d’être* – that they forget to look at the bigger picture. They don’t know how to step back - to say, ‘hang on here, this is the ideal – these are our values and this is what we would like (which we should not abandon, absolutely not) but we need to be flexible.’”⁷⁵

Lila gives the following summary of how she views the peace building as relationships approach in Kosovo. She explains,

“I do feel like slowly things are happening, but that it is very much pushed by internationals – it’s not real, you know. I’m not saying that there aren’t Serbs who

⁷⁴ Interview, 2009, Respondent 32

⁷⁵ Interview, 2008, Respondent 8

want this – but I’m saying in general. There *are* some real relationships. There are real friends – but this is a very small number. It’s like people are being quiet and people are accepting everything, but it is because internationals are pushing – it’s not real. And I feel like the internationals all will leave some day but that this will remain. And that it’s still there: there’s no trust since we never really talk about what happened.”⁷⁶

Possibly the saddest and most frustration aspect of this gulf between international agendas on the one hand, and local needs on the other, concerns the way in which local people in Kosovo have often been chastised (particularly following the March 2004 events) for failing to embrace reconciliation fast enough. For example in 2004, the Security Council made the following statement:

Everyone must engage in a systematic effort to foster reconciliation and build tolerance (...) There continues to be a lack of commitment among large segments of the (...) population to creating a truly multi-ethnic society in Kosovo (Security Council, 2004).

Yet Lila explains that when confronted with external pressure to pursue multi-ethnicity and to reconcile, she hears only what is expected of her, without being offered the tools that might help her to overcome her internal pain,

“If somebody tells me that I have to reconcile, first of all, after everything that happened I don’t feel willing to just go and say, “Hi, I want to reconcile with you.” Even though I know that that is maybe not the Serb that killed my mum and sister, it is still the language, and all the other associations: and I feel that they have not accepted what really happened here. I do also recognise what Albanians did after the war [revenge attacks] - I’m not denying that, but just the fact that you make a concert or make some kind of conference [about reconciliation] and totally ignore what happened – and somehow not touch that issue. This doesn’t feel right.”⁷⁷

A number of endeavours have taken place in Kosovo aimed at addressing suffering on an individual level; however local actors initiated nearly all of these, whilst internationals tended to view such approaches to peace building as too political⁷⁸. Alongside efforts to lobby for justice for the relatives, seen in the activities of Agron Limani’s organisation for example, is the Humanitarian Law Centre (HLC), which facilitates a programme known as the ‘Kosovo Memory Book’. Through this initiative, the events surrounding the violence in

⁷⁶ Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

⁷⁷ Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

⁷⁸ The exception to this is seen in the work of ICRC on missing persons

Kosovo are recorded with the aim of combatting denial and the political manipulation of human losses, and to ensure the integrity and transparency of war crimes trials (HLC Website 2011). Another initiative carried out by the former civil society organisation, Kosovo Action Network (KAN) in 2005, aimed specifically at addressing the issue of missing persons through a campaign entitled “We Are All Missing Them”, which comprised lobbying and awareness-raising activities, including the highly symbolic gesture of exhibiting photographs of missing persons outside the Kosovo Assembly Building in Prishtinë/Priština.

It must be emphasised here also that individuals who have suffered in Kosovo are not incapable of moving forward and healing. One Albanian woman explained her own journey of coming to terms with the past in relation to a recent experience at a meeting with a group of Serbian women. Before the meeting commenced, quite out of the blue, each of the Serbian women stood up and acknowledged the suffering that had been endured in their names, and apologised for this suffering. Though this may seem like a small gesture, in Kosovo, such public displays of acknowledgement are rare. This respondent was deeply moved by this experience and explained that, “my healing began then. It hasn’t finished yet – but it has begun.”⁷⁹ Reflections such as this one further emphasise the importance and value of acknowledgement in the process of building peace (Prager & Govier 2002; Lederach 1998).

Critical here also is the value that local actors in Kosovo have placed on actions which have sprung forth voluntarily from conflict parties, without being forced upon them through external pressures and activities engineered by the international community. Whilst all peace building activities do not need necessarily to be entirely self-originated, there has to be a decisive amount of self-motivation, particularly when it came to reconciliation, as identified by Assefa (2002). The following anecdote, provided by an international peace worker in Kosovo, relates to this point. He recalled meeting an Albanian official in his office and seeing an egg lying on the desk in front of him, decorated in the traditional way Orthodox Christians favour at Easter, suggesting that it had come from a Serb. The official saw the peace worker staring at the egg, picked it up, and said in good humour but with some force something like:

“Do you know what this is? It is an egg. And it was given to me by my friend: a Serb. And what’s more, nobody wrote a project proposal for him to give me this egg.

⁷⁹ Interview, 2009, Respondent 3

Nobody had to get funding, or to evaluate the process of him giving, and me receiving, this egg. He gave it to me of his own volition.”⁸⁰

The Albanian official was poking fun at the way in which the international NGO sector operates through projects and funding, whilst also highlighting the possibility and power that individuals in Kosovo have to be touched by a process of reconciliation, in a spontaneous or ‘organic’ way.

Peace as living a normal life, and being open to difference

Outside of this research, whilst in Kosovo, I met with an Albanian friend; a person who has never been involved in a peace project in his life, or even stepped inside the doors of an NGO. He is a painter. I told him about my research and he looked bemused, no doubt questioning why I was doing it. I realized that an assumption exists amongst those of us working in this field: that people who live in places like Kosovo are as preoccupied by the notion of building peace as we are. This is completely untrue. For example, another respondent felt that if she was to survey her close friends of a similar age to her (she is in her 50s) most of them wouldn’t even be able to tell her what the OSCE was, or what it was doing in Kosovo⁸¹. Many citizens in Kosovo are primarily concerned with getting on with their lives; pursuing their own desires outside of the context of being a ‘post-war’ nation, looking forward to a brighter future.

I asked my painter friend about peace in Kosovo and he made a ‘Pff-ing’ sound - an exhalation of breath through half closed lips. ‘I don’t care about peace,’ he said, ‘I just want to live a normal life.’ He explained that living a normal life means being able to travel abroad, choose his occupation and find a job⁸².

This desire to live a normal life is expressed by citizens throughout Kosovo in different ways, and is, for example, reflected in the lifestyle choices of young people. Whilst complaints circulate in certain circles about the threat of an influx of international chains entering Kosovo (McDonalds has for a long time been planning to open a restaurant in Prishtinë/Priština), the enthusiasm felt for the few burger bars and high street shops that have made it here (many being imitations of Western chains) reflect a desire in Kosovo to indulge in the consumerism that most of us take for granted. Kosovo’s younger generation,

⁸⁰ Interview, 2011, respondent 14

⁸¹ Interview, 2008, Respondent 8

⁸² Interview, 2009, Respondent 29

for example, know all about our globalized culture through films, the Internet, time spent abroad as refugees or students, or visiting family members, for example. Yet they are limited as to what they can lay their hands on at home - be that books on philosophy or Big Macs.

The emphasis by external actors implementing or funding peace building activities in Kosovo at the grassroots was placed overwhelmingly on transmitting 'values' and 'morals' (Human Rights, tolerance, Women's Rights, etc.), above and beyond presenting opportunities for young people to grow in other ways. By this I mean, to be opened up to different possibilities in life and to explore the world around them, beyond the narrow frame of being a 'post-war country'. For example, one local organization, which is behind many cultural and youth initiatives in Prishtinë/Priština has for many years been attempting to open a cultural centre in the city, which would comprise a café, library, an area for showing films, and a programme of visiting speakers from abroad. Yet the director of this organisation cannot attract funding he insists because the project is not multi-ethnic (few Serbs live in Prishtinë/Priština) and because it is not perceived as advancing notions of peace, multi-ethnicity and reconciliation in the accepted ways. Yet as this respondent emphasizes, the desire to live a normal life and the notion of building peace are inseparable. The director explained that opening people's minds up to new possibilities and crucially to *difference* is perhaps the most crucial ingredient to bringing peace to the region. The point he wanted to make was that you can organise all the multi-ethnic projects you wish, hold peace conferences, campaigns, etc. - but if an individual is not willing (or able) to open themselves up to new possibilities in life - which requires an ability to look at the world around themselves *critically* - then all of these activities will go to waste⁸³. Through people being exposed to different books, opinions, and music from abroad, even to a different way of dressing, it allows for a certain shift to take place. This 'opening up' was identified by respondents as central to any process of transformation that might take place in Kosovo.

Other commentators in Kosovo endorse the analysis provided by the respondent above. For example, the organizers behind SURF - a local collective which brought the pop band Morcheeba to Prishtinë/Priština in June 2010, stated in a recent press article:

We (...) believe in a progressive agenda and the need for Kosovo youth to open their minds and hearts (...) For Kosovans to be part of the normal world, with a normal life and normal services (Balkan Insight, 2010).

⁸³ Interview, 2009, Respondent 24

Petrit Selimi, who co-formed the pre-war civil society movement “Post-pessimists”, and who is director of SURF explains,

Kosovo youth are really hungry for signs of normality. “Being normal” is one the most undervalued drives. (...) Youngsters are not seeking to be rich, or famous, but just – normal. Be able to travel. Go to concerts. Have decent cinemas with decent movies. Have [a] playground for kids and green spaces in the city. Ordinary stuff of normal lives, which sometime seem so far away in the transitional Kosovo. (Kosovo: 2.0 2010)

As the academic Ana Devic points out, local meanings of peace in Kosovo are rooted in people’s everyday experiences, a fact that internationals have largely disregarded,

Coalescing definitions’ of peace building of the international peace brokers in Kosovo stifles local meanings of peace that may be informed by everyday life experiences (...) one must deplore the poor interest and investment of foreign donors in the realm of popular culture market and traditions of its consumption in the region (2006: 52).

This experience in Kosovo further endorses the need to address peace building from the perspective of people’s everyday lives (Richmond 2010), and I will return to this link between the opening up of ‘minds and hearts’ and peace building in Chapters 5 and 6.

Peace and peace building as utopian: local and international perspectives

Peace shifts to development

As I pointed out earlier in this chapter, interpretations of peace and peace building have shifted over time. Whilst above I examined this shift from the perspective of hope to one of disillusionment and contamination, here I present another dimension: the shift from ‘peace as physical security’ to ‘peace as development’ and the dilemmas that accompany this.

Before and after the war, peace for all citizens was overwhelmingly linked to security (feeling safe), the absence of physical violence, and the protection of human rights. Yet as time passed, in central Kosovo, peace as security became the less salient interpretation, as citizens felt safer day to day. This led to, as pointed out above, criticism of the international community regarding the ‘frozen peace’ which had descended on Kosovo, aimed only at maintaining stability, whilst failing to facilitate long-term development or positive peace. UNMIK was mocked for being a ‘preventative mission’ (Kurti 2011: 90) rather than one seeking to affect prosperity and long-term change; whilst Noel Malcolm (2010) commented

in 2010 that, ‘stagnation’ is by far the biggest factor affecting Kosovo, both now and in the future.

Within the literature review I identified a rift between scholars who call for more fluid interpretations of peace and peace building concerned not only with addressing direct drivers of the conflict (i.e. “fire-fighting”), but tackling the deeper issues at stake (Fisher and Ziminer 2009; Francis 2010); and those critics who argue that approaches to peace building should be clearly tied to the conflict, to prevent the boundaries of peace building become too blurred, rendering the term meaningless or indivisible from development (Chigas & Woodrow 2009; Lund 2005; LLamarezaes 2003).

As seen earlier in this chapter, in the case of Kosovo there was an initial *visionary* idea about peace, which was shared across the Albanian and international community alike. Yet, this gave way to disillusionment and cynicism, as expectations were not met. This was seen to cut both ways: both in terms of internationals not delivering on promises leading to concrete tangible improvements; and Albanians being perceived as ‘letting themselves down’ following the events of March 2004. Whilst amongst the masses in Kosovo it would be untrue to say that *no* idealized and utopian ideas about peace persist today (for example, particularly amongst the older generation, peace *does* retain an idealized quality linked to freedom; particularly amongst those who fought for a ‘Free Kosovo’ within the KLA⁸⁴); however actors at the grassroots argue that it is essentially the international community who have been most *idealistic* and least *realistic* when it has come to approaching peace and peace building. This idealism is blamed on external actors failing to understand the local context; being driven by a desire to impose external values onto the population to fulfil ‘liberal agendas’; and on an unrealistic idea of what can be achieved within very short timeframes.

One long-term observer of peace building in Kosovo, herself international, gave the following analysis of peace building in Kosovo in an attempt to convey the lack of direction observed amongst external actors,

“I’ll tell you a story which helps to characterise general peace building efforts in Kosovo. You recall the moment in Alice in Wonderland where Alice is going along a

⁸⁴ As the son of one KLA soldier in Kosovo put it, “This is what they dreamt of during those cold nights [of the war]; this is what got them through it: the vision of a ‘Free Kosova’”. One such veteran, an older man, became so enthused when speaking about peace, that he began to describe his vision of a perfect society. His closing words were: “and peace in Kosovo means a place where nobody smokes”. Interestingly he was smoking a cigarette as he said this. Respondent 19

path and she encounters a fork in the road? The Cheshire Cat is up above and so she stops and, after marvelling at this fantastic cat she asks, “Which road should I take?” The cat says, “Well that depends where you want to end up?” And she says, “Well, I don’t really know,” and the cat says, “Well, it doesn’t much matter which road you take.” So that is what one sees happening in Kosovo. They [the peace builders] don’t really know where they are going. They seem to be going towards something illusionary, and at best illusive...and at worst hypocritical.”⁸⁵

This respondent’s analysis reflects the fact that once peace is no longer linked to the absence of physical violence the term fails to provide tangible concrete goals to work towards.

Whilst multi-ethnicity and reconciliation have been the prime targets of international efforts in Kosovo at the grassroots, these are amongst the illusionary and illusive goals to which the interviewee above and others have referred. Lila for example, cited earlier in this chapter, emphasised that when it came to reconciliation, even if individuals in Kosovo *were* willing to reconcile, they are not at all clear about *who* they should be reconciling with, as most of those who committed crimes remain at large. Lila wondered if the international community, when they spoke of reconciliation, wanted her to go out on the street and randomly embrace a passing Serb⁸⁶.

One local peace activist recounted a story that illustrates this point by explaining how in 2000 an individual from an international NGO offered her the funding to implement a ‘reconciliation project’. It being less than twelve months after the war had ended she was somewhat taken aback - surprised that he perceived this as the time to begin such initiatives. The peace activist graciously refused the funding and advised him to return in a few years, when Kosovo might be more ready for his help. However, the man persisted, as he possessed a sturdy belief - along with a substantial sum of money - that reconciliation was an urgent necessity. He sought out and found another organisation willing to accept the funds, and a ‘reconciliation project’ was implemented, to little or no effect⁸⁷. In contrary to the approach of the external NGO, this peace activist explained how her own work towards reconciliation has taken place throughout the ten years following the war; built on carefully considered initiatives, which have responded to opportunities as they arose. For example, on one occasion she was able to rally members of different communities together to raise money for a sick child, which had a small impact on building bridges across communities.

⁸⁵ Interview, 2008, Respondent 8

⁸⁶ Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

⁸⁷ Interview, 2009 Respondent 3

She has striven to revive old networks of peace organisations from across Former Yugoslavia, which has led to inter-community links being created within Kosovo. She has established networks of organisations within Kosovo working cooperatively across divides. These are activities that are *responsive* to circumstances, forged in the everyday and founded on *long-term* vision, engagement and commitment: i.e. peace as a lifetime's work.

At the same time, one additional point needs to be emphasized here, which is that there has been a lack of willingness in some quarters to transfer human rights values across to the problems faced in other communities. Whilst Kosovo spent nearly a decade before the war asking for international intervention to protect them, once the rights of Albanians were assured, this overemphasis on human rights and associated themes (through a plethora of trainings, round tables, seminars, etc.) began to wear thin in the face of other now more pressing needs, particularly amongst young people. For example, the slogan on one T-Shirt printed in Kosovo a few years after the war read, "No more training, we want Jobs!" However, there was clearly a lack of follow through between the plethora of trainings in human rights carried out in Kosovo and activities signalling the embrace of such values. Just as human rights before the war essentially concerned the rights of Albanians (as they were the group facing persistent violation), following the war human rights continued to mean 'Albanian rights', for many. Whilst I would argue that this is down to a whole host of factors, including those I have outlined above concerning the suffering and experiences of individuals which serves as a barrier to reaching out to others (along with other concerns, examined in chapter 5), there has clearly been a gap between learning about certain values, and putting them into practice.

Before concluding this section, it should also be emphasized that the same shift - from *peace as security* to *peace as development* - has not taken place throughout Kosovo, particularly not in the north where the threat of violence is an everyday reality. In Northern Kosovo there is a greater willingness amongst civil society actors to speak about peace, and also reconciliation, as peace here is linked to an urgent need to stop the violence: Peace still represents something tangible. Reconciliation is of greater relevance also in the divided city of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, with Serbs living on one side of the river, and Albanians on another. Thus the notions of peace, reconciliation, and even of multi-ethnicity has greater currency in these areas as people are living fearfully in close proximity to one another.

Typology: interpretations of peace and peace building in Kosovo

In the following Table (Table 5), I present a typology of the dominant interpretations of peace and peace building in Kosovo as examined above.

Interpretations of Peace in Kosovo at the Grassroots 2001 – 2008			Table 6
	Characterized by:	Actors:	Consequences:
Peace as Hope	Positive attitudes, utopian, victorious, image of a better future, 'reclaiming of space'.	Internally and externally led. Particular to Albanian community	Initially positive, yet it is a sentiment that should be followed by action, otherwise it can become stagnation
Peace as Morals	Teaching Human Rights, training, values	Led by external actors	Limited: morals can't be imposed upon a population, they must be adopted
Peace as Relationships	The notion that integration and reconciliation will be the result of newly formed and 'restored' relationships across ethnic groups	Led primarily by external actors	Created resentment amongst those who had suffered. Can't be forced. Misses other opportunities.
Peace as Contaminated	Peace as conditional, carrot and a stick, peace driven by agendas at the top level	Caused by political level – international and national leaders	Undermines more natural process of interaction and dealing with the past at the grassroots, creates resentment, inhibits trust between groups
Peace as an Inner Experience	Healing, coming to terms with the past, addressing inner pain	A sentiment amongst large section of the local population	Local people resent not being given the time and space to come to terms with the past + lack of justice measures
Peace as Normal Life	Peace as irrelevant, 'I just want to live a normal life': i.e. peace as tangible development, rooted in 'everyday' normalization	A sentiment amongst large section of the local population	Largely ignored or misunderstood by external actors. Missed opportunity for peace building

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented a broad range of interpretations of peace and peace building in the context of Kosovo. Whilst in the early days we see that peace served as an idealistic message of hope - a hazy goal which was none the less helpful because it brought people together - as the years wore on, peace became interpreted by some as an empty or politicised message, or it symbolised domination or 'pacification'. For those who suffered in the war, peace has above all concerned their inner experience, a fact that is largely overlooked by those of us from outside. However, for people living and working in places more vulnerable to violence, peace continues to symbolise security, stability, and even the possibility of reconciliation for those located in and around the city of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë, for example. Though some people in Kosovo still hang on to utopian ideas about peace, it is essentially those of us from outside who have been most idealistic, and arguably *unrealistic* about notions of peace and peace building - for example, by focusing on a vision of a new multi-ethnic society and on reconciliation, without paying the necessary attention to what we meant by these terms, and crucially what is *possible*. Whilst local people have recognised that a process of transformation in Kosovo is going to take time and must happen organically, many of us from outside have rushed to come up with 'quick-fix' solutions to complex situations. Peace at its most idealistic is a fuzzy goal, and this opens the way for peace building to become 'anything and everything', making it potentially directionless. This chapter also highlights the fact that in Kosovo, how individuals respond to the idea of peace and peace building is in part dependent on their experiences, and in particular, on what they have been exposed to during the war.

Chapter Five: Multi-ethnicity and Grassroots Peace Building in Kosovo

“I don’t think I have still the sentiment within myself for multi-ethnicity. And whoever says they have: they’re lying.”⁸⁸

The basic principle that Kosovo is a multi-ethnic society needs to be said. It needs to be said about every society in the Balkans. It is just the basic condition of life for every country actually in Europe
- Noel Malcolm, 2010

“Multi-ethnicity: it is really vague. Who are you talking about? What kind of Serbs? I feel like first of all that’s one of the problems here when people talk about multi-ethnicity.”⁸⁹

Introduction

In this chapter I seek to understand how the international drive for multi-ethnicity in Kosovo has been experienced at the grassroots, particularly through peace building projects that utilized a contact approach. I begin first, however, by examining Kosovo’s social landscape: the relationships; allegiances; interests; prejudice; and languages, which serve to divide or unite members of different communities, and which seem so often to have been overlooked by those of us from outside. It was as if we saw Kosovo as a children’s toy village, which we removed from its box and tried to hastily assemble. It’s vast and intangible past; the subtle factors that inform the everyday experience of its people; and the complex rugged terrain comprised of languages, cultures, habits, and memories, were rendered irrelevant.

I show here that projects and programmes implemented at the grassroots (described often as ‘multi-ethnic projects’) - which sought to bolster the transnational agenda of ‘multiculturalism’ - were on the whole too fleeting to undermine the factors that keep members of communities separate. These initiatives largely failed to facilitate the formation

⁸⁸ Interview, 2010, Respondent 12

⁸⁹ Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

of lasting friendships - recognised as a prerequisite for successful projects forged on contact hypothesis Pettigrew (1998) - whilst underestimating the lack of interest and motivation amongst participants in forming relationships across ethnic divides. Revealed here also is the contradiction that exists between, on the one hand the engagement of individuals in multi-ethnic activities, and on the other, the lack of genuine sentiment or will to strive towards creating a multi-ethnic society.

As I will show here, a more appropriate approach to bridging the gulfs that divide people in Kosovo (which are not only ethnic) is to present more opportunities for individuals to be 'opened up to difference'. The drive must be to empower people to think critically about the world around them. Such an approach does not necessitate contact between members of different ethnic groups, nor must increased contact necessarily be the desired outcome.

Part one: understanding multi-ethnicity and integration in Kosovo

Introduction

As discussed earlier, following the war, the majority of international actors engaged in Kosovo viewed creating a multi-ethnic society as crucial. In fact, fostering multi-ethnicity in Kosovo was adopted as a logical approach to peace building. This approach reflects the wider assumption that a stable society in Kosovo is a multi-ethnic society (Council of the EU 2010), with stability being the primary ambition of the international mission (Kurti 2011). It reflects also the high priority given within peace building programming towards initiatives that seek to further 'reconciliation' at the grassroots (Smith 2004: 42).

However, what this multi-ethnic society in Kosovo should look like was never clearly defined, and when we consider that multi-ethnicity at its highest expression might mean an 'integrated society', or at its lowest, simply as a society in which more than one ethnic group coexists; it wasn't immediately clear as to what we were aspiring to.

Through analysing documents in which external actors have promoted multi-ethnicity in Kosovo - be they the press releases of the Security Council, or academic papers supporting multi-ethnicity as a goal - it becomes apparent that in Kosovo multi-ethnicity has largely centred on integration, although this has never been explicitly defined⁹⁰. Kostovicova &

⁹⁰ See for example: SC/7659 7 February 2003 *Security Council, in Presidential Statement, Reaffirms Commitment to Multi-Ethnic, Democratic Kosovo* <http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/pressrels/2003/sc7659.html>, OSCE 'Details'

Bechev (2004) observe that following the war the international community found itself ‘baffled’ by how to address ethnic separation in Kosovo, and that whilst SRSG Bernard Kouchner considered creating safe havens for Serbs, there was instead an ‘insistence on the Western style of multiculturalism based on integration’. Even when the inevitable happened and Serbs fled to enclaves, the international community continued to prioritize multi-ethnicity: seeking to establish a multi-ethnic police force; promoting multi-ethnic governance; and later, supporting a myriad of initiatives aimed at uniting youth at the grassroots, such as multi-ethnic community centres.

The insistence on multi-ethnicity in Kosovo reflects also the common misconception that prevailed following the war that what Albanians and Serbs needed was to ‘re-integrate’ with one another Bieber (2006) ⁹¹. This is despite (as seen in previous chapters) there having never previously been a high level of integration between communities in Kosovo.

Albanians and Serbs have historically chosen to live fairly separate lives: in part due to the deep rifts that developed from the period of Kosovo’s increased autonomy at the end of the 1960s and strengthening from the time of the 1981 demonstrations. As we have already seen, these divisions deepened to the point of quasi-apartheid during the 1990s, until war broke out in 1998. Separation is also down to cultural factors, alongside language and at times, class.

The mission statements of a myriad of international organisations reflect this focus on multi-ethnicity. The OSCE (cited earlier also), states that as an organisation it is guided by the importance of ‘establishing a viable multi-ethnic society’. Likewise, the EU sees its goal as to ‘support and assist the Kosovo authorities in developing a stable, viable, peaceful and multi-ethnic society’. According to the EU, European integration will follow once Kosovo embraces the European value of multi-ethnicity (EU Kosovo website). Other organisations state that they aim to ‘develop and strengthen civil society, build confidence and promote active participation of minority groups in public life’ through multi-ethnic projects (World Vision 2011); and to ‘foster a peaceful and productive society’ through ‘promoting interethnic cooperation among youth from ethnicities formerly in conflict’ (Mercy Corps Kosovo website). These statements are typical.

Newsletter, June 2003 <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/15313?download=false>, Kosovo ‘One year On Achievement and Challenge’, by Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, Secretary General of NATO, 21 Mar. 2000 <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/repo2000/index.htm>, de Vrieze, F (2004) Kosovo after the March 2004 Crisis 15 Helsinki Monitor 147

⁹¹ Bieber cites the following examples of studies which call for ‘re’-integration in Kosovo: Eric A. Witte, ‘Reconstructing Kosovo: The Ethnic Dimension,’ Kurt Spillmann & Joachim Krause (eds.), Kosovo: Lessons Learned for International Cooperative Security, Bern et. al.: Peter Lang, 2000. See Bieber 2006

I begin this section by explaining the way in which multi-ethnicity was accepted on the surface before examining a number of factors that shape day-to-day interaction between communities, potentially hindering, but in some cases helping a process of integration.

Accepting multi-ethnicity on the surface

In some ways, the attempt by the international mission post-1999 to create a multi-ethnic society was not dissimilar to the approach of Tito. ‘Brotherhood and Unity’ was forged upon the rigorous projection of the image of ethnic harmony that Tito wished to create - one that had never previously existed. This succeeded in suppressing tensions for some time, yet as explained in Chapter 3, Tito’s policies aroused resentment amongst Serbs for allowing what was perceived to be an ‘Albanianization’ of Kosovo. Tito also did nothing to address the aspirations of those Albanians in Kosovo who wished to see Kosovo’s unification with Albania. Instead, Tito dealt with ethnic feeling by rendering it more or less ‘taboo’ and by brushing the strife experienced between Albanians and Serbs in the first half of the 20th Century under the carpet. However, as we have also seen, Tito’s efforts essentially succeeded in ‘keeping a lid’ on conflicting emotions and aspirations within his lifetime; whilst his policies did not impact the local population deeply enough to be sustained following his death.

Post-1999, multi-ethnicity - like Brotherhood and Unity - was accepted on the surface by the Albanian population, whilst masking deeper resentments or ambivalence. The decision amongst Albanians to collude with this international agenda - at least in the public sphere - was forged on pragmatism. As this Albanian respondent explains,

“I think that in the end people accepted multi-ethnicity: it was kind of a choice made between remaining poor or having a better future. So it was a kind of trade-off...”⁹²

The anticipated fruits of this trade-off were, amongst other things: on-going international assistance with the goal of furthering Kosovo’s development (jobs, future EU membership, greater freedom to travel abroad, etc.); protection from the threat of further military offensives from Serbia; and, crucially, fulfilment of the goal of independence (with some hoping for a more long-term outcome of an alliance with Albania). However, Serbs and other minorities in Kosovo were not unaware of the ‘hidden transcripts’⁹³ complicit with this

⁹² Interview, 2010, Respondent 12

⁹³ I use this term to relate to the concept proposed by James Scott, whereby hidden transcripts are the private pieces of information - traditions, beliefs, interpretations - that people in societies hide and which are confined to the private sphere. See Scott, J. (1990).

public acceptance amongst Albanians of multi-ethnicity, and this ‘double-dealing’ seriously diluted the power that multi-ethnic peace building could have at the grassroots from the outset. The Albanian publicist and former politician Veton Surroi has also drawn comparisons between Titoite ideology and the post-war international mission, stating,

I would advocate a tolerant Kosovo, but not necessarily a multi-ethnic one. This reminds us of ‘brotherhood and unity’ in socialist Yugoslavia, which failed in flames as we have seen (Surroi in Sahin 2009: 247).

The habit of interaction

One of the key factors thwarting integration in Kosovo at the grassroots has been that few young people (those born from 1980 onwards, constituting close to 50% of the population) have ever known ‘deep levels of coexistence’ - a term I use in reference to Rigby’s typology ‘levels of coexistence’ (2006: 13). Though small numbers of young people may have experienced pockets of friendly cooperation depending on where they lived⁹⁴, the vast majority of the younger generation are not ‘in the habit’ of interacting. They have grown up living overwhelmingly separate lives.

This experience differs from that of their parents. Prior to 1989, the minority of Albanians in employment were likely to have Serbian colleagues and were bi-lingual, perhaps even participating in Yugoslav-wide networks and associations⁹⁵. One British colleague of mine, for example, recalls meeting a ‘Yugo-nostalgic’ beekeeper in the Prishtinë/Priština market some years after the war who lamented his loss of contact with beekeepers in other parts of the country and internationally. My former neighbour in Gjilan/Gnjilane (in his 50s) also spoke of fond memories of having worked in a firm with Serbian colleagues, and missed what he described as a ‘happy and collegial’ working environment. The younger generation of Serbs and Albanians, however, barely know one another’s languages, have very different cultural references including through TV and music (which are segregated in Kosovo) and crucially, have been educated entirely separately⁹⁶. Albanians and Serbs from Kosovo even traditionally visit different places on holiday within the region.

⁹⁴ For example, in the fictional children’s book *Girl of Kosovo* (Mead, A. 2003), which is based on a true story, the author describes a friendship between an Albanian and a Serbian child growing up as neighbours in a village. Such relations have existed, although they have not been widespread and were put under extreme strain in the years leading up to the war.

⁹⁵ Serbian was widely spoken by Albanians in Tito’s time, whilst some Serbs knew Albanian.

⁹⁶ For example, when running workshops in Gjilan/Gnjilane in 2004, I observed how surprised young Albanians were to discover that the Roma involved in the project were Muslims and shared many customs. This was the first time they had met and talked.

Therefore, even when we put aside the factors that divide young people based on the events described in Chapter 3, which blighted their childhoods and adolescences, their very lack of *experience* of inter-communal interaction, and lack of common references and common ground also represents a significant stumbling block. In being urged to integrate, young people are essentially being asked to start from scratch.

Prejudice and status in the Former Yugoslavia

A further factor that deserves attention here concerns the unfavourable attitudes and status issues that have persisted between communities over the decades in the Former Yugoslavia, which cannot be easily erased from collective or individual memory. I touched on some of these in Chapter 3 also.

In the Former-Yugoslavia, with ethnic, national and religious beliefs repressed under communism, class identification prevailed (Drakulic 1999: 50), and Albanians were always at the lowest end of the social strata (Ugrešić 2007). They were the least integrated group in the Former Yugoslavia, not only because they spoke a markedly different language and adhered to a different set of moral codes; wore different traditional costumes and favoured different traditional dishes. They were also the poorest group and widely considered backwards. Drakulć (1999) describes this as outright racism - endured by Albanians for generations - even if much of it took place in the private sphere. This disparity in status, which persists today, serves also as an impediment to fostering integration in Kosovo. By its nature, an integrated 'multicultural' society must be forged on some semblance of mutual tolerance and equality.

Lasar Nikolić (2005: 51 - 77) has undertaken research into prejudices concerning Serbs and Albanians, and has mapped the proliferation of negative attitudes during the 1990s in particular. Nikolić's study shows that in surveys conducted in the 1990s, Albanians were described as the least accepted group in Yugoslavia by Serbs, with only 33 per cent of citizens of Serbian nationality saying they would agree to socialize with Albanians. 52 per cent accepted Albanians living in the same country, 48 per cent as co-workers, and 40 per cent as friends. Only 22 per cent would accept an Albanian as a relative (2005: 54). Over 50 per cent of respondents in Serbia accepted the stereotype that 'all Albanians are primitive and uncivilized' (2005: 53)⁹⁷. Attitudes amongst Albanians about Serbs have been no more

⁹⁷ Interestingly, this mirrors attitudes which circulated about Albanians some one hundred years ago – see Banac, I. (1982).

positive. In a survey carried out in Kosovo in 1997, Albanians described Serbs as disliking other nations (81 per cent), sly (52 per cent), pushers (39 per cent), selfish (27 per cent) and rough mannered (26 per cent) (Ibid.).

The subtle interplay of status relations that persist in Kosovo was exemplified to me whilst carrying out this research when I visited Brezovicë/Brezovica - a ski resort in South West Kosovo. Perched high up in the Šar Mountains it is a vast expanse of snow-coated peaks, glittering in the sunshine. It is also one of the few spaces in Kosovo that is 'shared' by members of different ethnic groups, with families and young people from across the country choosing to spend time on its slopes. Whilst communities in the rest of Kosovo live out their lives in markedly separate spaces, Brezovicë/Brezovica is a rare example of some sort of 'normalization' of inter-communal relations, at least on the surface.

When I visited the resort in 2009, I was with a mixed group of friends from Kosovo, and it was here that I witnessed two unpleasant episodes involving members of our party. It was this experience that brought home to me the layers of past experience and learnt behaviour that needs to be overcome if multi-ethnicity is to transform itself from the pages of the mandates of international organisations, into an everyday experience amongst the population.

The first thing that occurred was that an Albanian from our group visited a cafe in order to access the Internet and was told by the Serbian proprietor that no Internet connection was available. When we returned together later that day, however, I was invited to use the Internet. My friend became frustrated and suggested that the proprietor had lied about the Internet connection. The experience brought up all sorts of destructive emotions for him: about how it had been before the war for Albanians in Kosovo, who in his experience had been placed in a subservient position to Serbs and denied access to resources at the whim of those in charge. This interplay of power relations then repeated itself the following day over a discussion about tickets for the ski lift. When an Albanian in our group questioned the Serbian operator over his right to keep his ticket once he had paid, the owner became angry, apparently because he saw this individual as challenging his authority. It began to feel like an ethnic issue as the two snapped at each other: the young Albanian speaker struggling to keep up his end of the argument in Serbian.

The difficulty is that even if such encounters are *not* fuelled by status issues with their roots in ethnic prejudice - it is perfectly possible, for example, that the Internet connection was merely not working earlier in the day - individuals from all communities find it difficult not to relate negative experiences such as these to a bitter past. Nikolić explains,

The main difficulty with these prejudices is that they persist even when the factors that have generated them cease to exist, because they influence behaviour and the process of information processing obstructing their change. They function as self-fulfilling prophecies. One puts the other in the role matching the stereotype and adapts his or her own behaviour accordingly; the other person, in turn, reacts most often in a way that confirms the expectations. Information confirming stereotypes is easier to remember and is felt to be more credible (Nikolić 2005: 67).

Time

Another barrier to integration is the lack of time that has been allowed to pass since the war. This links in with the absence of justice measures discussed in earlier chapters, including in relation to missing persons. One international police officer in Kosovo is quoted as saying,

I come from Northern Ireland. We've had 30 years, and we're still only feeling our way. People here in Kosovo are being pushed too fast (Simonsen 2004: 305).

The passage of time is perhaps one of the least valued needs in the context of Kosovo, but potentially one of the most valuable. Whilst this need for time to pass should not be given as an *excuse* by top and middle level actors in order to avoid beginning a process of forging positive links at political and institutional levels, or used to exonerate violent behaviour after the war, at the grassroots, the passage of time contributes to an overall process of healing, and with the course of coming to terms with a changing local reality. In a 2008 Gallup poll, for example, whilst 61% of Serbs in Kosovo stated that their community would *never* accept the independence of Kosovo, crucially one quarter thought that it would be possible within ten years (2008:7). Aside from time contributing to an emotional process of overcoming grief resulting from the war, this suggests that the passage of time plays a significant role in deepening *acceptance* of a new and changing reality in Kosovo.

Conformity

Another factor that deserves attention here is the high level of 'conformity' that exists within Albanian society. Janet Reineck (1993) argues that conformity and the fulfilment of

traditional behavioural norms in the eyes of the community override individual authority amongst Albanians in Kosovo. She quotes an Albanian respondent, who states,

We have always been oppressed by the weight of public opinion, afraid of the consequence of unconventional action. Now in the pseudo-freedom of recent years, we are still bound to this rigid way of thinking. We can't imagine anything else (1993: 8).⁹⁸

In the present day, families and the wider community continue to exert pressure on young people to conform to cultural norms, which can serve to inhibit Albanian and Serbian interaction also.

This conformity needs to be understood also within the overall context of the Albanians' customs and common laws, which promote strong in-group unity, cohesion, and conformity around the family, clan, and ethnic *circle* (or *rreth*, referred to by Reineck). Conformity amongst Albanians can be traced also to the institution of *besa* (which translates as giving one's word, promise, or oath), a tradition etched in Albanian common law, which states that if the *besa* is broken, there will be a blood feud or other revenge. Thus conformity (conforming to the common code) lies in many respects at the heart of what it traditionally means to be Albanian⁹⁹.

As seen in earlier chapters, the overwhelming mood of the Albanian family stretching back to the revocation of Kosovo's autonomy and far beyond was loyalty to the community and to the Albanian struggle. The Albanian nationalist discourse was *forged* upon (and subsequently nourished by) the desire for unity amongst Albanians in the region; drawing upon stories of the heroic acts of Skanderbeg who rebelled against the oppressive other in order to assert Albanian rights. Put simply, multi-ethnicity is in many ways the antithesis to Albanian emancipation, and runs contra to the Albanian national struggle. This is compounded by the fact that unity and in-group solidarity were *the two key survival mechanisms* employed by Albanians during the 1990's in their struggle against Serbian oppression and in consolidating movements of resistance (both non-nonviolent and violent). It was this solidarity, which stretched uncharacteristically wide (beyond the immediate family or close community circle) that arguably prevented a much earlier outbreak of war in the territory, and led eventually to freedom from Serbian supremacy - all be it partial - under

⁹⁸ The 'pseudo-freedom' referred to here concerns the burgeoning civil resistance movement observed in Kosovo at this time.

⁹⁹ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a full discussion on this theme. For more on Albanian society in Kosovo written in English see Duijzings, G. (2000) *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo*; Clark, H. (2000) *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*; Reineck, J. (1993) 'Seizing the Past, Forging the Present...'

1244 - and greatly assisted by NATO. This makes promoting the agenda of multi-ethnicity and integration in Kosovo, which demands a high level of *inclusion* of Serbs and other ethnic groups, all the more challenging.

Following the war, conformity amongst Albanians has continued, exemplified, for example, through reluctance to speak openly of the anger surrounding the abuse of power by former members of UÇK, which is usually expressed only in the private sphere. This conformity is based to a significant degree also on fear¹⁰⁰. Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers document post-war conformity in their analysis of an emergent ‘master narrative’ forged on ‘the cult of Adem Jashari’ (the UÇK commander massacred alongside his extended family by Yugoslav security forces in 1998), whereby an immortalized Jashari has become a central symbol of the contemporary Albanian struggle. In one statement recorded by Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers, a professional Albanian woman states,

If you asked me, I would tell you that Adem Jashari was crazy. Nobody has the right to get his children and wife killed. But I would not give my opinion in front of anyone, and if you did it for me, I would deny I ever said it (2006: 521).

Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers argue that no counter-narrative to the cult of Adem Jashari has emerged because public criticism of the heroism of the Albanian freedom fighter amounts to ‘blasphemy’ (2006: 520). Multi-ethnicity represents for some a similar betrayal, as this respondent explains,

“It was hard. I mean, how people reacted depended also on their experience and their family and the place they came from. If they came from Drenica and suffered during the war and went up to hide in the mountains, then the idea of multi-ethnicity was betraying their values.”¹⁰¹

Similarly, writing from the perspective of the Palestine/Israel conflict, Sara Roy (2008:4) has identified a lack of freedom that exists amongst groups immersed in collective struggle, which serves to prohibit individuals from *choosing* to reach out to and embrace ‘the other’, as such an act amounts to a form of dissent:

Dissent is often considered a form of defection and betrayal, particularly in times of conflict when the impulse to conformity is acute.

Wider divisions and intolerance in Kosovo

¹⁰⁰ For example, some Albanian journalists who have written on this issue have subsequently received death threats. Informed by Author’s own observation and conversations with respondent 25

¹⁰¹ Interview, 2010, Respondent 12

In Kosovo daily struggles for survival (economic and political) have dominated people's everyday lives for an extended period. This has been cited as a factor serving to undermine the development of Albanian society in broader terms, preventing, for example, the emancipation of women and other issues of change (Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers 2006). The civil resistance movement represented a significant step towards a broad process of change within the Albanian community; however, in Kosovo, struggles over daily survival still dominate. This is illustrated in the frightening poverty figures, which reveal Kosovo to be the most impoverished territory in Europe.

In such a climate - compounded by the challenges people have faced resulting from the war - it is difficult to imagine Albanians *choosing* to reach out to members of other communities. As one respondent put it, wherever there is resource scarcity there will always be divisions: the phenomenon of 'them and us'. This is symptomatic of competition over resources and opportunities.

Duijzings (1998: 12) emphasises also that in Kosovo, ethnic divisions have not always been the most salient one; and suggests that conflict and tension permeates Kosovo's society, which has evolved along lines other than ethnic ones. Duijzings cites 'clan or tribal loyalties' along with, religion, 'the urban-versus-rural dichotomy', and gender, as division in daily life. Wider intolerance in Kosovo's society is demonstrated through, for example survey data revealing that only 6% of Kosovars would say that their communities are a good place for homosexuals (Gallup 2007). However, such attitudes should be viewed also through the frame of *ignorance* stemming from a lack of exposure to difference, rather than outright intolerance. Nevertheless, the proliferation of negative attitudes concerning 'otherness' is a potential inhibitor of multiculturalism. It was Thaçi himself who remarked that,

Since there is no tolerance among Albanians, it is an illusion to expect tolerance between Albanians and all the others (Thaçi cited in ICR 1999: 10).

This intolerance was demonstrated, for example, through the post-war in-group violence, seen through the Dukajine case and other killings.

Factors supportive of coexistence in Kosovo

As seen above, numerous factors stand in the way of interethnic integration in Kosovo. At the same time, evidence suggests that some sort of peaceful *coexistence* or at least *interethnic cooperation* is possible in Kosovo, and in some cases is already in existence, and

I will examine this here.

In a 2008 Gallup poll, approximately seven in ten Kosovo Albanians stated that they saw living together peacefully with Kosovo Serbs a possibility. This reflects what is, on the one hand reluctance amongst Albanians to embrace the model of *multi-ethnicity* promoted by the international community forged on integration, and on the other the widespread acceptance of Serbs living in the territory, accompanied by a common desire to avoid further violence. For example, eight out of ten of those surveyed felt that there would be no further armed conflict in the region (Gullup 2008: 29). Clearly therefore, nurturing low levels of coexistence is a realistic option in Kosovo – more viable than attempting to transpose multiculturalism onto the territory, at least in the short-term. As evidence from other societies emerging from violent conflict also suggests, the concept of coexistence is anyway a ‘less loaded term’ (Bloomfield 2006: 13), which leaves space for a deepening of coexistence over time (Rigby 2006; Kriesberg 2002; Crocker 2000).

Further evidence of the viability of coexistence is provided by the accounts given above by those Albanians who possess fond memories of interaction between communities in the past, particularly those forged through work and common interests. Crucially, in the Former Yugoslavia, positive and cooperative relations have always endured - even in Kosovo and even during the conflict and war - when there has been *a high level of common interest and need*. Drakulić (2011:2) argues that despite the nationalist ideology that condemns such collaboration in the Former Yugoslavia as ‘anti-patriotic’ *people do work together*. Both before and following the war a high proportion of Kosovo’s trade has been with Serbia, and even if this has represented an ‘ideological clash’ for many, it has continued. For example, official data for the year to June 2009 shows that over 11% of Kosovo’s imports came from Serbia (Republic of Kosovo website 2009).

Aida A. Hozic’s (2004; 2006) in-depth analysis of cooperation in the Balkans through illegal activities points also to a significant level of cooperation between members of all communities across the Former Yugoslavia. As Hozic points out, since the early 1990s and the outbreak of multiple wars in the wake of Yugoslavia’s collapse, cigarette smuggling has become a multi-billion-dollar business in the Balkans. Hozic argues,

Unlike many problems in the former Yugoslavia, smuggling activities were never linked to ethnic ties or hatreds. In fact, the smuggling rings depend on cooperation across ethnic lines and state borders (2004: 39).

This suggests that once a high level of self-interest enters the equation, willingness to cooperate across divides can take precedence. Likewise, Drakulić argues that reconciliation in the Former Yugoslavia will come about not through ‘round table discussions’, but through collaboration forged on every day relations. She makes the following observation,

[You] only have to look at the criminals who on all sides cheerfully pursue collaborations dating back to the war: from the smuggling and exchange of petrol, weapons, people and tobacco to criminal favours such as assassinations. Bizinismen big and small, of all nationalities and kinds, also collaborate – be it overtly or covertly (Drakulić 2011: 2).

Thus according to Drakulić, reconciliation is not ‘rocket science’. It is also common knowledge in Kosovo that there are brothels in operation that serve all communities. Local people joke that they are bastions of multi-ethnicity.

Though in the case of Kosovo I would substitute Drakulić’s ‘reconciliation’ for ‘deepening coexistence’ - as the divisions here are potentially greater than in other parts of the Former Yugoslavia - cooperation through common need appear to be one of the defining factors serving to strengthen ties.

Typology 1

Above I have summarized key factors that serve as barriers to the brand of multi-ethnicity promoted by the international community, which was forged on integration. I have also shown factors supportive of a level of peaceful coexistence and cooperation between ethnic communities in Kosovo.

Before moving on to examine the experiences of those who have engaged in multi-ethnic peace building activities in Kosovo, presented here is a typology illustrating how the ‘idealized future’ proposed by external actors forged on multi-ethnic integration, sits alongside factors which drive the conflict, or serve as barriers to integration, drawing from my analysis in this and previous chapters. Within the typology I present a picture of a more ‘realistic future’ forged on coexistence. In doing so, I draw from Galtung’s ‘ABC’ model wherein *Attitudes* cover feeling, belief, desire, will; *Behaviour* concerns cooperation or coercion, conciliation or hostility; and *Contradictions* are the incompatibility of goals and the parties’ perceptions of the other. This table builds upon Rigby’s typology of ‘Levels of Coexistence’ (Rigby 2006: 13).

Barriers to an 'Idealized Future'

Table 7

Attitudes, Behaviours & Contradictions which impede integration	Features of an 'Idealized' Future Forged on multi-ethnic integration	Key Actions Needed to Arrive at Idealized Future
<p>Attitudes Fear for security & future (self and territory); hatred & distrust towards the other & bitterness/anger about the past; grief (loss of loved ones, property, livelihood, territory, dignity); desire for revenge; intolerance of reminders of the other/past; deep sense of injustice; wider intolerance of difference in society; daily struggles for survival; other as 'different', 'bad', an 'enemy'.</p> <p>Behaviour None-Lethal: Segregation/avoidance of the other; not leaving own community (isolation); reluctance to speak other's language; none inclusion of minorities in civil society (initial); obstruction of minority return; parallel institutions in Serb communities.</p> <p>Lethal Intimidation, murder & kidnapping of minorities/non-loyal Albanians (initial); lethal violence among Albanian factions & organised criminal violence; hate speech; March 2004 violence; intimidation & violent coercion within Serbian communities to prevent cooperate with Kosovo institutions/civil society.</p> <p>Contradiction Kosovo's future status: with Serbia v. without Serbia; Status of Northern Kosovo; Pristina government v Belgrade government (for minorities in Kosovo); other has no 'right' to rule Kosovo; other has no 'right' to live in Kosovo; desperate need for Kosovo's development vs. 'frozen stability'/limbo Desire to accept other vs. desire (or coercion) to conform to community expectations.</p>	<p>Widespread reconciliation Mixed schools Bilingualism Friendships across ethnic groups Multi-ethnic businesses Multi-ethnic institutions Multi-ethnic government Total freedom of movement (based on confidence, and disillusion of fear) No threat of ethnic violence Security for all Speaking freely about the past publicly Common understanding of history.</p>	<p>Justice for victims (national trials, fact finding measures, reparations) endorsed by leaders on both sides. Information on and return of the bodies of missing persons.</p> <p>Acknowledgement & apologies: political & individual (both communities, Serbia to take lead)</p> <p>Allow for the passing of time</p> <p>Interaction between communities based on common needs</p> <p>Influential leaders actively pursuing new ways of talking about the past in the public sphere</p> <p>Revised history books/curriculum embraced</p> <p>Status issue resolved, including disputes over Northern Kosovo/South-Eastern Serbia + regional trade</p> <p>Belgrade switch attitude towards Kosovo from 'territorial claims' to protection of community & heritage</p> <p>Serbian leaders in Kosovo participate in Kosovo institutions</p> <p>Returns process facilitated by Albanians</p>
	<p>Features of Realistic Future Forged on Coexistence</p> <p>Communities live side by side – interaction based on common needs Little fear of ethnically motivated attacks Cooperative inter-communal ventures (e.g. fields of business & education) A generation of inspiring new leaders emerge who are less burdened by the past and keen to good internal & regional relationships Freedom of movement built on growing confidence Past discussed in public sphere, with less anger</p>	<p>Actions Needed to Arrive at Realistic Future</p> <p>Justice for victims (national trials, fact finding measures, reparations) endorsed by political leaders on <u>both</u> sides</p> <p>Information on, and return of the bodies of missing persons</p> <p>Acknowledgement & apology (political & individual)</p> <p>Time to come to terms with the past</p> <p>On-going opportunities for young people to access opportunities – international & regional travel, exchanges, cultural, formal and non-formal education with the goal of widening perspectives</p> <p>Joint educational and business initiatives founded on genuine needs</p>

As this typology shows, there are serious attitudinal factors that serve as barriers to integration. I have examined these in Chapters 3 and 4, and they encompass in particular the emotional dimensions of the conflict, for example the resistance described by Lila in Chapter 4, who feels too much pain to engage in reaching out to Serbs. The behaviour relates to aspects of the conflict examined in Chapter 3 including the post-war and March violence. These aspects are in some respects expressions of the attitudes. Finally, the contractions represent the ‘sticking points’, which have served to suspend Kosovo in a state of limbo - encompassing issues such as unresolved status, but also the conformity that exists in Albanian society.

Those actions I identify as necessary to arrive at the ‘idealised future’ projected onto Kosovo by the international community are not *impossible*, however they are extremely long-term. Crucially, they demand a high level of motivation amongst those at the top level, as well as those at the grassroots, in order to forge cooperation and dispense with the pain of the past - a process, which would be eased by justice, acknowledgement and apology. A revised, more realistic set of activities is provided in the typology also - serving to support a more viable future forged on coexistence.

Part Two: Experiences of multi-ethnic peace building in Kosovo at the grassroots

Above I have explored challenges to integration in Kosovo, and suggest that inter-ethnic relations forged on coexistence, rather than multi-ethnicity is a realistic approach. In this section I examine the experiences of those engaged in multi-ethnic peace building endeavours at the grassroots.

That peace building at the grassroots came to concern a contact approach to the degree that it did reflects the high level of attention given to fostering inter-ethnic cooperation, tolerance and reconciliation from 2001 onwards. Whilst during the emergency phase activities at the grassroots were largely ad-hoc, or focused on addressing immediate needs such as grief and trauma, from 2001 a shift occurred as it became clear that reconstruction of Kosovo concerned not only infrastructure and elections, but also the ‘softer’ elements such as tolerance and multi-ethnicity (Llamazares & Reynolds 2003). Activities at the grassroots were increasingly valued for the role they could potentially play in supporting peace building efforts initiated by actors at other levels: in particular the process of refugee return from 2002 onwards.

Multi-ethnic peace building: necessary, but limited

Many respondents engaged in peace building efforts at the grassroots emphasized the importance of establishing contact between members of communities following the war. Through projects such as multi-ethnic sports tournaments, attempts at establishing mixed youth centres (a pursuit which was often unsustainable¹⁰²), seminars, training, summer camps, etc., those who most likely would never have met otherwise, came together. Through this contact - be it a brief encounter on the football field, or a longer period of time spent working cooperatively on a common project such as making a film - individuals faced 'the other'. They were offered the opportunity to adjust whatever enemy images they may have inwardly formed to fit the individuals that stood before them. This is of greatest significance to youth who, as explained earlier, had little to no contact whilst growing up.

The value of such encounters was emphasized, for example, by the director of one organisation working across divides in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë,

“Contact - the opportunity to talk to each other - this is a precondition if we really want to build a multi-ethnic Kosovo. If you build walls between people then it is not going to work.”¹⁰³

Participants of these projects emphasized that contact had given them the opportunity to establish basic communication and to make a choice about getting to know the 'other', as this Albanian respondent from Podujevë/Podujevo explains,

“...The value of all these exchanges and communication was just to kind of establish basic communication and to know each other, and then to go back and to reflect on and to decide whether you will accept them [members of the other community] or not. So that is a value of the international community – facilitating this communication - it forced the channels open.”¹⁰⁴

Another respondent explained, who facilitated grassroots programmes,

“They did have contact and some of them were like: ‘oh these Serbs they are not as bad as we thought’, just through this exposure.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² My own observation of multi-ethnic youth or community centres in Kosovo has been that rarely have such centres succeeded in catering to different communities (Gjilan/Gnjilane and Lipjan/Lipljan are good examples of this). Though such centres were often started with the support of international organisations, they tend to face on-going challenges with funding along with a lack of commitment or funds from local authorities. They largely fail to remain multi-ethnic.

¹⁰³ Interview, 2009, Respondent 1

¹⁰⁴ Interview, 2010, Respondent 12

¹⁰⁵ Interview, 2009, Respondent 24

However, though respondents acknowledged the value of a contact approach to peace building, a number of serious limitations and objections were raised and I examine these here.

Respondents explained that if multi-ethnic projects did not factor in *sustained* contact or follow-up activities once the initial phase of a project was over, then the positive impact of the contact did not ‘run deep’. Similar concerns were raised in a report conducted by CDA (2008), whereby efforts in Kosovo to facilitate contact were described as scattered in nature and thus largely ineffective. This respondent observed how his friends behaved having been involved in a number of multi-ethnic youth camps a few years earlier. He explained,

“I met some friends who were in some camps that [an international organisation] organised very early in 2004, and if you hear them talking now in 2008 or 2009 it is so strange: like they’ve gone back to their traditional thinking. So that really made me wonder...do they really have any good experiences or memories from these camps? But probably no – they just have an idea of how the other is.”¹⁰⁶

These findings from Kosovo concur with research in other contexts presented in the literature review, whereby it has been proven that short-term contact efforts make no significant impact on adjusting attitudes and behaviours amongst participants (Trew 1986; Niens & Cairns 2005); and whereby Pettigrew (1998: 76) emphasizes that for contact to have a lasting effect it must be long-term and sustainable. Crucially, adequate time must be given for cross-group friendships to develop. This raises questions as to why, when research exists in other contexts (in particular from Northern Ireland), a greater awareness did not exist amongst NGOs active in Kosovo about the shortcomings of this approach, and for the need for contact to be sustained. Few respondents could recall examples of internationally led projects facilitating *sustained* contact between members of ethnic groups, however a small number of organisations did take a longer view, and I analyse some of their efforts in Chapter 7.

In part, this lack of follow-through corresponds with the overall short-term nature of international engagement in Kosovo, a concern I return to in Chapter 6. However it is also a consequence of the ‘quick-fix’ or ‘photo-opportunity’ brand of peace building, which prevailed in Kosovo. Because international organisations needed to be *seen* to be advancing reconciliation, contact projects provided the most apparently impactful and newsworthy

¹⁰⁶ Interview, 2010, Respondent 12

evidence of this. Respondents lamented the number of international reports that emerged from Kosovo sporting pictures of smiling Serbian and Albanian children side by side, having apparently enjoyed the day together. This approach to peace building at the grassroots reflects the misconception that contact is a ‘magical solution’; a panacea for healing divides; or represents a form of healing in itself.

Alongside the short-term manner in which these projects were implemented, is the contradiction that arises from so many of these endeavours (training, seminars, etc.) taking place outside participants’ communities. Many activities were facilitated in hotels or training centres in other towns or countries in the region (e.g. in Macedonia and Greece), and this created ‘false atmospheres’. Though individuals may have participated with great zeal in multi-ethnic activities *within* an activity, once they returned to their communities they faced prejudiced attitudes amongst their families, communities and peers, along with negative influences from the media. Therefore, attitudes generated in such settings were difficult to sustain once they returned home and did not translate into a change in *behaviour*, as explained by the following respondent,

“[Activities] that are outside of one’s community are useful because they allow people to be a bit freer – to experiment with thoughts and ideas and things that they want to say – and to see something new. So that’s important. But organisers and facilitators then really have to think: ‘if Agron and Goran and Shpresa and Ivana are saying this in Skopje or in Thessaloniki, how are we going to look at that in terms of what they are going to say in Gracanica or Pristina or Gjakova?’ What makes them uncomfortable to do it, or what would be the barriers...?”¹⁰⁷

Another respondent attempted to illustrate this contradiction by drawing two separate circles on a sheet of paper. In the first circle he drew the participants interacting. In the second circle he wrote ‘community’. He explained that the first circle needed to be transposed onto the second for this contact to have an impact. Contact needs to make sense in context of people’s daily lives.

Evidence presented in the findings of Paffenholz’s (2010: 427) study of civil society peace building in other contexts reveal how difficult it is for peace building efforts at this level to pervade the negative influences brought to bear upon an individual by his own family and community, which Paffenholz argues ultimately have a much greater influence than short

¹⁰⁷ Interview, 2010, Respondent 8

term peace efforts. The experience of the following respondent mirrors the findings of Paffenholz:

“I’ve been in so many trainings and people after that just get tired and do not continue communication or they just remember the past, recall the past and, for example, if something else happens – an event or a protest or a bombing or something – they just go back and recall the memories and say ‘oh, he’s one of those.’ So, even this entire environment can damage all those small things...”¹⁰⁸

In the Kosovo context this resistance is compounded further by the high level of conformity that exists in Albanian society, described above.

The geographical distance separating participants of multi-ethnic projects also served as a barrier, as did language, status and class. An Albanian university student from a middle class Prishtinë/Priština family often didn’t feel comfortable or compelled to visit her Roma or Serbian counterparts living in a rural area or enclave beyond Prishtinë/Priština. This reflects other divisions in society including the rural-urban split, and thus separation must not be understood only in terms of ethnicity or prejudice. In places where communities live in closer proximity, though links made through NGO projects served to ‘de-mystified the other’, rarely did this translate in daily life into more than a new willingness to say “Hello” when they passed one another in the street. The forging of close and sustained cross-group friendships as a result of brief encounters through the projects of NGOs, appears to have been very rare in Kosovo. Crucially, the high level of motivation needed for participants to establish such long-term relationships was missing, as this respondent explains,

“...because all these initiatives were so ad hoc, so empty and so weak, it would become difficult to keep contact with them [Serbs]. I mean, for what reason? Just to be friends? People started to be rational and to say, “why waste time? I don’t get to spend time with my friends, but I’m spending time with Serbs, which is more difficult to adapt to.””¹⁰⁹

Respondents also emphasized that there was too much ‘contact for contact’s sake’; with projects built not around long-term shared tangible goals that made sense in peoples lives, but more around the contact itself. This local leader of a Kosovo-wide youth programme explains,

“If projects had focused on efforts which served people’s self-interests to a much higher degree, the likelihood of contact being sustained would have been increased.

¹⁰⁸ Interview, 2010, Respondent 9

¹⁰⁹ Interview, 2010, Respondent 12

(...) I think that it is a mistake when you bring people together artificially to communicate. And that happened a lot after the war. But people are still in the same position. I know that people who were in these seminars, their positions didn't change because they talked about Serbia or Kosovo.”¹¹⁰

I will return to this issue in Chapter 7.

Peace building: begin by tackling *difference*, not ethnicity

Respondents suggested that a different approach to addressing the divisions separating communities in Kosovo is needed, other than those forged on contact hypothesis; arguing that beginning with ethnic difference in a society such as Kosovo's where there are many divisions and prejudices amongst individuals, it always going to be a limited approach. This reflects the analysis given above, that ethnic divisions in Kosovo are not necessarily the most salient ones. This respondent, who worked before and following the war in establishing youth centres within rural communities explains,

“Sometimes what I found was that when we did get the kids [from a youth centre] involved in activities with other organisations, frequently their fellow Albanians from the cities were more intolerant with our kids because they were from rural areas, than they were with Serbs. Because in Former Yugoslavia you have always had the rural/urban divide – the cavern is reflected in those sorts of attitudes.”¹¹¹

With so many divisions existing in society, respondents emphasized that there is a need to nurture in young people a willingness to accept others: to embrace difference at all levels, which need not, and should not, begin with ethnic difference. The peace builder cited above provides here further examples from her work with rural youth:

“I had no intent to impose a multi-ethnic agenda because I feel that if you are going to try to work with a community to become interested in exploring something different you sometimes have to start from within rather than without. What the centre tried to do was to say, “look if the kids can be free to do things that they, or their older siblings, were not able to do, then they learn; they broaden their horizons and then begin to encounter difference in one way or another.” Something we did was do a lot of outings with the kids – like we were invited to Albania to perform one of our plays, or just going to Prishtina. Most of the kids in 1999, 2000 or 2001 had never been to Prishtina. You don't start with forcing people to encounter something that they are not

¹¹⁰ Interview, 2010, Respondent 9

¹¹¹ Interview, 2009, Respondent 8

ready to encounter.”¹¹²

Respondents identified the need to encourage critical thinking skills amongst young people as a tool for peace building, whilst the education system in Kosovo was identified as a major feature that undermines critical thinking amongst young people. Children have largely been taught ‘by rote’ - in such a way that they are not encouraged, or empowered, to question what they are being told: be that by their father, their teacher, or leaders. The following respondent, whose work involves teaching university students in Prishtinë/Priština explains,

“Schools in Kosovo: it is a typical bank like education...the roots of the problems here are also the result of years of oppression, the result of a sort of oppressive collectivism. For generations people have been taught that they always have to agree and think what the leader agrees and thinks. So you don’t think for yourself. What your father says is right. Even now, that’s my mission with my students: to challenge that. They say things like, “No, but it’s like this!” and I say, “why is it like this? Is this just because your dad says that? Is it because your dad thinks that it’s right? Because then there is a problem.” You have to *question*, you have to think for yourself. (...) But it is very challenging. On the thinking level, I think people feel very defeated.”¹¹³

One NGO focused on facilitating debating activities in schools aimed at fostering critical thinking, in recognition that if individuals are not willing or able to look at the world around them critically, then contact between communities alone has little impact on addressing prejudice. He explains here his approach to peace building,

“I would say that anything that helps build critical thinking and debate [constitutes peace building]. We did a programme in schools which was essentially that we got a group of university students who went to high schools and said, “Today we are going to have a debate – all of these students go on this side of the class and all of these on this side: you’re the pluses, you’re the minuses. Here’s your proposed debate topic for today. Now we have 15 minutes to come up with some things for this and against this. Choose two representatives to debate.” (...) Mostly children and young people don’t have the chance to do this – they don’t have a chance for critical thinking. Usually the teacher stands up and gives a lecture maybe taken from a book. Debates were on themes that were really close to them: like school uniform, or in the medical faculty they debated abortion. There may have been some themes related to prejudice and abortion, but nothing related to the war or anything like that. We wanted to explore a

¹¹² Interview, 2009, Respondent 8

¹¹³ Interview, 2010, Respondent 31

little bit the market for critical thinking. When I talk with one of the coordinators in Plemetina¹¹⁴ my point to him is that the Serbian high school he went to had a fundamental goal, which was to create people who would follow somebody like Slobodan Milošević. You make people who don't think or question and who will study what they are told in the way they are told and that's it.”¹¹⁵

Kruhonja's reflection on peace building in the Croatian context, mirrors findings of respondents in Kosovo, whereby she too suggests that changing a violent society in a nonviolent way entails,

‘working systematically to change the very assumptions and perceptions of the people involved, and creating opportunities for new ways of living and acting’ (Ingelstam 2001: 25).

The analysis of respondents in this research suggests that in approaching peace building through relationships, we have in fact only been addressing *surface factors of the conflict*. It is as if we are looking at a lake. The surface of the lake is what we see to be the problem: i.e. inter-ethnic relationships, but below the surface are the other factors, which determine the relationships themselves. By addressing only the surface factors, little progress has been made in Kosovo as a direct result of multi-ethnic peace building.

Multi-ethnicity: involvement without sentiment

One final concern I tackle here concerns sentiment and will: the willingness and ability amongst individuals engaged in multi-ethnic activities to allow encounters to pervade the negativity felt about the ‘other’.

One observation made amongst respondents in Kosovo is that an individual's choice to participate in multi-ethnic projects does not necessarily reflect a commitment to multi-ethnicity. Participants, and even facilitators, became involved in multi-ethnic projects for a whole host of reasons: from wanting to enhance their CVs (for example by participating in training); to having an interest in the activity on offer (football, film-making, etc.); or even simply because the organisation was offering a lunch that was free.

That individuals have not necessarily become involved in multi-ethnic projects in a bid to reach out to others became clear to me through my involvement in 2005 in a multi-ethnic

¹¹⁴ Village outside Prishtinë/Priština with a predominantly Serbian and Roma population.

¹¹⁵ Interview, 2010, Respondent 11

project which brought youth together to develop activities on the theme of ‘tolerance’ for primary school children. During this project one of the young people involved admitted privately that he had participated in violence during the March 2004 riots. How, I asked him, could he on the one hand sit and talk with other members of the group about issues surrounding tolerance; and on the other engage in violence against their communities? He explained that he made a distinction between *the sorts of people* engaged in this project, and those that had been targeted in the riots. He also described the bitterness he still felt about his own experiences in the war. Though this is perhaps a rather extreme example, it symbolizes the potential gap that exists between on the one hand engagement in ‘worthy’ projects, and on the other, the sentiment needed to work towards fostering a different kind of society. Similar observations have been made in other contexts whereby Hewstone & Greenland (2000) found that participants of contact projects - even if they do come to view a small number of people in a group in a more positive light - do not necessarily *generalize* this experience beyond the specific situation in which the positive contact took place, and to the group as a whole.

I explored this theme of engagement with multi-ethnicity *verses* complicity with multi-ethnicity as a goal, with one interviewee in particular; whose name is Veprim¹¹⁶. Whilst still in high school, Veprim became involved in a Kosovo-wide youth network that brought young people across communities together for shared seminars and camps. Initially he hid the multi-ethnic nature of these activities from his parents knowing they would disapprove, but over time he became involved in many more activities, necessitating sustained contact with members of other communities. Recognized by the facilitators of these projects as a natural leader, he went on to work for other NGOs, before securing a position within a large international agency. I was curious to know how Veprim’s own experiences as a young person who had lived through the conflict and war on the one hand, related to his openness to engage in multi-ethnic endeavours on the other. Did his involvement with so many multi-ethnic activities over the years signify that he was able to put the hardship he endured behind him and to embrace this concept of a multi-ethnic society? For example, I knew that he still harboured some bitterness for all that he and those close to him had endured before and during the war; so how did this relate to his willingness to engage with the agenda of multi-ethnicity?

¹¹⁶ Not his real name

To begin with he was keen to highlight the positive aspects of multi-ethnic projects in Kosovo, as have others above. He explained that without this engagement with members of other communities he would have listened only to his parents and maintained prejudiced attitudes. He explained that it was as a result of *sustained* contact with those from all communities over a number of years, that he stopped making snap judgements about individuals based on ethnicity. However, though he emphasized that contact between members of communities presented the opportunity to meet, he also insisted that in his experience all this contact did not lead to the formation of new and lasting relationships between those involved,

“All of these projects [enabled] people to know ‘who is the other’ and to make the choice. And in most of the [cases] the choice was no.”¹¹⁷

And in terms of the degree to which multi-ethnicity was embraced by the population as a whole, he also remains doubtful,

“People deep in their hearts did not believe in that. But it became a ‘brand’, it became an externally imposed value that was key for going forward; for getting jobs; being accepted in this new public sphere...”¹¹⁸

When he reflected deeply on his own experiences, he struggled to express how he felt, but eventually concluded,

“...I don’t think I have still the sentiment within myself for multi-ethnicity. And whoever says they have; they’re lying. Yes...it’s um...it’s a very fake...it’s a very difficult...it is just like trying to impose a gene from a cat to a human...”¹¹⁹

What Veprim is trying to express here is that having endured certain extreme experiences during the conflict and war, it is then very difficult to wipe away the impressions they have left upon him.

Veprim’s experiences of multi-ethnicity are not rare amongst his peers. A generation of young people, particularly those from cities who possessed English language skills and a desire to gain new skills and experience, have embraced agendas imposed upon Kosovo by international organisations, whilst at the same time facing their own limitations concerning how deeply they can internalize these agendas in a way that would affect attitudes and behaviours in the longer term. Whilst on a cognitive level individuals recognise some need

¹¹⁷ Interview, 2010, Respondent 12

¹¹⁸ Interview, 2010, Respondent 12

¹¹⁹ Interview, 2010, Respondent 12

to embrace members of the other community, on an emotional level, their personal experiences serve as a barrier.

Typology 2

The plethora of ad-hoc, short term contact endeavours, though in some ways positive, largely failed to affect a shift within people to the extent that they have become willing and eager to work towards building a multi-ethnic society. In the previous typology I analysed the barriers inherent in creating a multi-ethnic society forged on integration. In this typology, I illustrate the factors that stand to affect a shift on the following three levels (described as the three H's): heart, head and hand, based upon Abu-Nimer's model (2001: 689) presented in Chapter 2. According to Abu-Nimer's analysis, activities seeking to engage participants across divides must seek to engage all three of the H's:

This typology shows the ways in which contact might serve to affect a shift at these levels, whilst also illustrating how certain issues – such as internal pain and resentment caused by a lack of justice measures – are not tackled through contact.

Affecting Heart, Head and Hand through “Multi-Ethnic Peace building”		Table 8
Affecting Heart (Emotions):	Affecting Head (Cognition/Attitudes)	Affecting Hand (Behavior)
<p><u>Necessitates:</u></p> <p>Seeing beyond the past; Letting go of pain; Coming to terms with the past; Willing to start from ‘today’; Embracing the other; Feeling a sense of oneness or connectedness with others; Feeling trustful; Feeling that your suffering as a result of the conflict has been acknowledged by the other.</p>	<p><u>Necessitates:</u></p> <p>Seeing people as individuals rather than those who inflicted pain on yourself or your community; Generalizing the experience beyond the contact; Curiosity about the other community; Identifying personal benefits in forming inter-ethnic relationships (i.e. friendship, joint ventures, opportunities); Bonding around common interests. Overcoming in-group conformity (bravery)</p>	<p><u>Necessitates:</u></p> <p>Communicating/interacting with one another beyond NGO projects; Initiating joint projects; Pushing past expectations and resistance in family and community; Visiting one another’s communities; Learning each other’s languages.</p>
Barriers to Heart (Emotions)	Barriers to Head (Cognition/Attitudes)	Barriers to Hand (Behaviour)
<p>Grief; Lack of justice measures; Strong sense of internal injustice; Strong emotions built on past experiences; Fear; Lack of public acknowledgement for the past (both parties); Missing persons; Personal hardship resulting from conflict.</p>	<p>Lack of motivation; Daily preoccupation with own needs; Reaching out to others represents Injustice/disrespect to those who died/community; Lack of understanding of the experiences of others; Lack of knowledge of the other community; Difference in language and cultural references; Lack of critical thinking skills.</p>	<p>Geographical distance between communities; Language barriers; Pressure from one’s own family and community; Habit: i.e. not accustomed to socializing across communities; Stigma.</p>
Overcoming Barriers to Heart (Emotions) Through Contact	Overcoming Barriers to Head (Cognition/Attitudes) Through Contact	Overcoming Barriers to Hand (Behaviour) Through Contact
<p>Sustained contact</p> <p>Activities forged only on common needs and interests (no ‘contact for contact’s sake’)</p> <p>Begin with encountering difference in more general terms (not just ethnic)</p> <p>Activities focusing on fostering critical thinking skills (e.g. debating, journalism training, conflict resolution)</p> <p>Don’t address conflict head-on</p> <p>Activities take place within one’s communities as well as outside</p> <p>Contact sustained beyond the project – Follow up activities</p>		

As this table shows, for multi-ethnic peace building to have an impact on deepening coexistence at the grassroots in Kosovo, contact must be sustained and activities should be forged on common interest. Such activities should take place within participants' communities, or be rooted in something that can be sustained where participants live. However, these findings reveal that there is also a need to foster critical thinking skills amongst individuals, and to begin not with ethnicity, but by tackling difference in more general terms.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the barriers that exist to creating a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo forged on integration, which has been a primary goal of the international mission. I suggest that integration is an unrealistic goal in Kosovo and that more appropriate would have been to work towards establishing low-level or 'shallow' coexistence following the war.

Multi-ethnic endeavours have proven to be a limited approach to peace building at the grassroots, as though contact has helped in some ways to facilitate communication between communities, for contact to run deep in Kosovo, it would be necessary for activities to be long-term, sustained, and to be accompanied by greater degree of follow up; thus allowing relationships to deepen. There was insufficient contact based on long-term shared interest and too much 'contact for contact's sake'. The every day barriers which divide communities: language; geography; culture; and even class, undermine the role that short term contact can play as a tool for long term integration. Finally, emotional barriers should not be overlooked. No matter how hard participants may try to embrace the multi-ethnic agenda; their experiences during the war and previous years will, for many, serve as a barrier.

Beyond multi-ethnic peace building or contact, is the need to affect a shift in young people so that they feel empowered to question and to think critically about what they have been told – by their parent, leaders, and peers. By addressing inter-ethnic relations head on through attempting to build relationships between members of communities, we overlooked the deeper issues of the conflict, namely the need to foster a wider inclusiveness within Kosovo's society. This relates also to the notion of fostering *Cultures of Peace*, rather than pursuing peace solely through relationships.

Chapter Six: Us, the Peace Builders

If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life

- Henry Thoreau (2007: 47).

A wearisome number of observers, especially inexperienced journalists parachuted into Kosovo, have blamed all UNMIK's failings on its employees. If this were true, there would be little reason to scour the record of this international administration for lessons. The only change necessary would be to make future international administrations more successful than this one would be to start with better people

- Mason & King (2006: 22).

“Almost all the UNMIK officials I've met were worst prepared than Balkan Peace Team volunteers. And nearly all had shorter term contracts!”¹²⁰,

- Howard Clark (2011)

Introduction

In this chapter I analyse some of the failings of the international community's mission in Kosovo (encompassing UNMIK and UN agencies, international NGOs, and donor agencies, etc.) not so much from the viewpoint of what organisations *did*, but from the perspective of the some of the negative *attitudes* and *behaviours* identified by respondents amongst those who worked within them. My goal here is to show that the failings of the international mission cannot be blamed solely on organisations and their mandates, but that *personal conduct* also plays a role when it came to supporting a process of change at the grassroots.

One of the fundamental complaints concerning the approach the international community has taken to Kosovo has been that it tackled the challenges its society faced in a manner that was exogenous to local communities (Lemay-Hébert 2009). The result was that it undermined local ownership (Narten 2010); side lined local leadership and cast aside an existing culture of human rights forged before the war (Mertus 2004); and that it resulted in resistance at the local political and civil society levels (Visoka 2011). Some of the

¹²⁰ Balkan Peace Team was comprised of international volunteers who supported local activists in the FU from the time of the war in Croatia. They were active in Kosovo until 2001.

disappointment surrounding UNMIK's conduct in Kosovo is captured in data showing that whilst UNMIK enjoyed 40% of local citizens' support in 2003, this had dropped to a mere 15% by 2009 (UNDP 2010).

The manner in which international organisations essentially 'land and take over' in post-war contexts - flooding the local scene with externally sponsored and conceived programmes and transforming local 'civil society' in a host of ways - has been examined in depth in this and other contexts (see e.g. Pouligny 2005; Stubbs 2007; Bagić 2004; LLamazares & Reynolds Levy 2003). Less has been written, however, on what local actors at the grassroots in Kosovo identify as the negative attitudes and behaviours amongst international actors, and how these have impacted on peace building. Discussions of such themes tend to be confined to the private sphere where they form a lively discourse.

In chapter 2, I presented Ramsbotham & Woodhouse's (1996: 226) framework proposing 12 key principles that should underpin humanitarian intervention in conflict settings. Amongst these principles are the convictions that: the outcome of the intervention should be to the overall advantage of those in whose name it was carried out; and, crucially, that it should be conducted in such a way that it both preserves autonomy and supports those working locally to resolve conflict and alleviate suffering. Also, Ramsbotham & Woodhouse argue that the interests, motives and behaviour of those who intervene should be compatible with the professed purpose of their intervention (i.e., in the case of Kosovo 'peace'). The findings from respondents that form the basis of this chapter reveal a gap at times between the stated goal of 'peace' in Kosovo, and the manner in which international personnel have gone about fulfilling their mission.

Whilst Mason & King (2006: 22) make a point of arguing that the failings of UNMIK must not be blamed upon its employees - stating that if this were the case the only step necessary would be to 'start with better people' - this attitude deflects from the need amongst all of us engaged in what can broadly be defined as 'peace work' to reflect on our own personal conduct in such settings. As emphasised in Chapter 2, Peace Studies is founded on the principle that societal change requires a degree of personal transformation amongst those who seek to bring it about - as was the conviction of Gandhi - and this understanding has formed an essential part of its outlook since (see e.g. Curle 1972; Kraybill 2009).

Though a gap may always exist between the commitment of internal and external actors in a place like Kosovo - as for outsiders the issues at stake are never sufficiently a matter of life and death (Fisher and Zimina 2009: 22) – as I will show here, a lack of deep *personal commitment* amongst external actors can have a detrimental impact on peace building itself. Internationals working in Kosovo have increasingly been described by locals as ‘self-motivated’ or ‘self-serving’, and seen at times as driven by careerist or financial, rather than altruistic goals. High salaries earned, life-style choices, which contrasted with local standards of living, and the short contracts personnel have served in Kosovo have helped to cultivate this impression.

Local civil society actors argue that internationals saw themselves as ‘helpers’ or ‘saviours’, rather than equals working collaboratively with local people, and that they took an *egotistical* rather than *empathetic* or *compassionate* approach to their work. Also, neutrality towards communities signified for some a lack of deep involvement and commitment to local people’s lives - when what was needed was a high level of motivation and care, rather than distanced or ‘professional’ attitudes. I argue here that what was missing in Kosovo was a high level of *deep engagement* with the local context, requiring that external actors transcended insider-outsider divides to a greater degree.

The roles of international actors in Kosovo

This chapter makes reference to the conduct of members of the amorphous group of actors described often in Kosovo as the ‘international community’. Provided here therefore is a brief overview of positions and roles held by international actors engaged at the grassroots in peace building.

Day-to-day, those whose experiences I share here engaged most often with the Field and Programme Officers of international organisations and agencies. For example, the OSCE established five field offices across Kosovo, covering thirty municipalities. International Field Officers worked within these and were engaged in activities across four key areas. These were described as: ‘democratization’; ‘human rights’; ‘rule of law’; and ‘elections’. Though the OSCE was initially charged with ‘institution building’, as it panned out, it spent much of its time attending to so called softer issues, such as promoting human rights, supporting the media, and organizing elections (Mason & King 2006:77). Therefore, a substantial proportion of OSCE’s time was spent engaging with local communities. This included organizing trainings on human rights or capacity building, for example; or

fulfilling its mandate through providing small grants to local organisations that implemented projects to fulfilled OSCE's broader goals. In the latter case, local organisations essentially operated as 'service providers' for the international mission (Pula 2005; LLamazares & Reynolds Levy 2003). The elements of the OSCE's work concerning elections are less relevant here.

The main problem with the way in which OSCE interacted at the grassroots was that, as essentially a *political* organisation, its priorities were not set by local communities, but by people in offices removed from communities, including outside of Kosovo. Thus it failed to be truly responsive to what was happening on the ground, or accountable to local people. Additionally, its heavy bureaucratic structures undermined the impact its staff felt they could have at the local level long-term. As this respondent explained, who worked for OSCE for two years:

"I had to constantly battle to get something done that affected people outside the organisation [i.e. local people]. The structure was so debilitating: it was a parody; it was a joke"¹²¹.

Another central problem was that, unfortunately, Field Officers were often young and inexperienced, and crucially, rarely stayed for extended periods (a point I return to below).

UNMIK and UN agencies also employed international Programme Officers who engaged with civil society organisations. Even more so than with the OSCE, international staff who fulfilled these roles often spent only a small proportion of their time in the field and often found themselves responsible for little more than dishing out funds to those local groups who possessed the capacity to write convincing funding proposals. However, this was not always the case, and credit must be given to those individuals who were very dedicated and who engaged to a higher degree with local communities, within what were also stifling bureaucratic structures.

The engagement of international NGOs at the grassroots was much more varied and is more difficult to précis here. As well as running their own programmes, increasingly as the years passed, international NGOs engaged local groups as implementing partners. They also established 'hybrid' local offices overseen by international staff, but run by locals (Pula 2005). In some cases these arrangements saw local organisations operating as complete pawns of their international patrons (LLamazares & Reynolds Levy 2003: 16).

¹²¹ Interview, 2009, Respondent

At other times, the relationship was more satisfactory, and this was the case in the excellent collaboration between the Swedish NGO Kvinna till Kvinna (KTK) and the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN). This partnerships stretches from the pre-war period to the present day and provides an example of what CDA (2004) describe as 'positive partnership', which are horizontal and based on mutual consent.

Other international agencies, alongside the international development wings of foreign governments such as the British Department for International Development (DIFD) and the US Agency for International Aid (USAID), operated almost entirely as grant providers. The interaction between international personnel within these organisations and local people centred most often on contact with local NGO representatives, which took place within their offices, alongside sporadic trips to the field.

The personal conduct of international actors in Kosovo has been determined therefore to a greater or lesser degree by the cultures and constraints of the organisations within which they have worked, and this must be recognized. At the same time, suggesting that organisations shaped *every* aspect of our engagement with the Kosovo context implies that we have no personal agency, which is untrue. As I will show here there are a number of ways in which the decisions we make and our attitudes impact the broader context. In presenting the testimonies of the local people here my intention is not to disregard the dedicated efforts of international organisations, or to demonise their staff. Far from it, and in hearing the complaints of local actors, I recognised my own shortcomings as well as questioning my own motivations and conduct as an outsider in Kosovo.

Commitment

The first concern examined here is the lack of commitment amongst international actors working in Kosovo. One of the central indicators of this was that few international staff remained in the territory for significant periods (i.e. more than two years). Reasons given for the high staff turnover within international agencies have included burnout, alongside the physical discomforts of living in Kosovo (Mason & King 2006: 77-78). International actors I have spoken with often cite career motivations for moving on, or commonly that they are simply 'tired of Kosovo', and are eager to gain experience in a new country¹²². The consequence of this high staff turnover was that, within larger organisations, employees spent much of their time getting to know complicated international structures, rather than engaging with local communities (Mason & King 2006: 78). At the grassroots, projects and

¹²² Respondent 4

programmes lost their momentum and consistency, as good working relationships established through partnerships between locals and internationals were prematurely ruptured. One respondent, for example, complained that the staff he collaborated with on a major youth programme in Kosovo changed as often as every six months, which seriously impeding the project's progress. The short-term engagement of international staff also signalled a lack of sincere concern about local people's needs.

A further indication of low levels of commitment – which is also an issue of dedication - is seen through the lack of *local knowledge* possessed by international actors arriving in Kosovo. This was observed immediately following the war, and has continued to be the case amongst new personnel arriving in the territory since. There are any number of stories from the field which illustrate this phenomenon and provided here are some examples.

One example is seen in a report of a western NGO worker lecturing on trauma after the war, who advised one woman whose daughter was waking in the night in terror not to let her sleep alone. 'But there are 20 of us sleeping in the room', explained the mother, reflecting the fact that in Kosovo family groups often share sleeping space (Clark 2002). Another example is seen in the response received by those who complained to the UN and OSCE about their failure to employ local women in senior positions after the war. They were told that women in leadership posts *was alien to the local culture* and that, in any case, *women in Kosovo are not interested in participating in politics or public life*. This is completely untrue, as prior to the war Luleta Pula had headed a 60,000 strong women's wing of the LDK, and Albanian women had participated in, and facilitated, the activities of Motrat Qiriazhi (see Chapter 3), alongside running underground parallel schools, for example (Lesley Abdela 2003)¹²³. In 2009, when conducting this research I observed the continuation of this pattern in a whole host of ways. For example, one of the most senior figures in EULEX¹²⁴ expressed complete surprise to me that there had ever been a movement of nonviolent resistance in Kosovo prior to the war, or that current figures in public life had played a role in it.

Whilst international actors arriving in Kosovo cannot be expected to be *experts*, they need to possess a grounded knowledge of the local context. Without this mistakes are made, and

¹²³ Respondents also recounted this experience in interviews and described it as the ultimate example of the lack of genuine engagement amongst international actors with the local context in Kosovo.

¹²⁴ EULEX is the European Union rule of law mission active in Kosovo since 2008, overseeing justice, policing and customs.

local people's trust and faith in international actors is undermined. Katarina Kruhonja - whose reflections on peace building in the Croatian context I admire as she examines issues faced by individuals in peace work - argues that a sincere and long-term commitment by external actors is necessary in order for their involvement to be constructive. Kruhonja asserts that international workers should enter foreign contexts as if embarking with local actors on a 'joint long-term adventure'. Kruhonja compares the outsider to a child who is adopted into a new family, and explains that,

'the child brings "her world" with her into the new family - the child changes the whole life of the family - that family's life will never be the same.' (Ingelstam 2001:25).

For Kruhonja, involvement in peace building at this level symbolizes an act of service: '*Commitment* is an inclusive word: it implies a work for somebody with somebody' (ibid.).

The uncertain commitment of international actors in Kosovo has contrasted with that of local members of civil society, some of whom played roles in the civil resistance movement, working for change in a climate of intense hardship¹²⁵. During this period such individuals disregarded personal goals and comforts - as seen through the high number of volunteers active in the movement (for example 7,000 in the case of the Mother Theresa Association – see Clark 2000), and through the arrest and imprisonment of activists. Thus, civil society roles (if they were ever perceived as such at the time) were never seen as 'jobs' or 'careers', but represented instead commitment to a common cause¹²⁶. This reflects a wider phenomenon in the former Yugoslavia where grassroots activism has tended to have strong ideological or political leanings. This is observed in the grassroots movement of Serbs in Kosovo in the 1980s and amongst social movements in the region including in Slovenia and Croatia (see Stubbs 1996).

Following the war, whilst civil society underwent a dramatic transformation in role and approach (Bekaj 2008), a number of local actors continued to work in a very dedicated fashion –swimming against the tide by lobbying local government, or facilitating cross-community cooperation, for example. Those working in and around Mitrovica/Mitrovicë on both sides of the conflict consistently put their lives at risk in the process of carrying out

¹²⁵ Although this was not always the case: For example, there were certainly many mixed motivations amongst those locally who established NGOs following the war, including financial and career motivations.

¹²⁶ This is not to say that some actors from this period did not benefit from a career progression later, for example the radio journalist and activist Aferdita Kelmendi went on to become the owner Radio TV 21. There are a number of other examples of this.

their projects, whilst one Albanian peace activist included in this research reports receiving death threats for her on-going work with Serbian communities in central Kosovo.

Thus the enduring commitment of those working for change in Kosovo at the grassroots contrasted drastically with the attitudes of many external actors, who came and went over the years and for whom peace building has signified a job; a contract; or a brief spell of work experience in a foreign land. The impact of this has been that it damaged trust between insiders and outsiders, and undermined the chances of peace building being a truly collaborative process – one that was transformative and based on mutual care.

The case of Krusha e Vogel in 2006

Observed also at times in Kosovo has been a lack of sensitivity towards the most vulnerable sections of its society by members of the international mission. In part this is down to a lack of local knowledge – as described above – but this failure is rooted also in a much wider ignorance concerning how to interact appropriately with local people, particularly those affected by violence. The notion that the *means* and not only the *end* is of utmost importance in peace building (a concept rooted in nonviolence) has been largely lost in many activities in Kosovo.

To illustrate these points, I return to the villagers of Krusha e Vogël in southwest Kosovo whose plight I introduced in Chapter 4. As already explained, this village experienced a massacre in 1999, killing 70% of its male population. Though the story presented here is the most extreme case I have encountered concerning the failure of external actors to conduct peace building activities in a nonviolent manner in Kosovo, it illustrates the degree to which peace building has broken from its transformative roots, and the potential consequences of this.

In May 2006, a convoy of 12 UNMIK armoured vehicles carrying international police officers and a number of Serbs who had previously lived locally, arrived in the village of Krusha e Vogël, for what it transpired later was a ‘fact-finding mission’. The convoy was unannounced and its arrival came as a total surprise to the residents, who experience few international visitors to what is a remote area of Kosovo.

According to reports, as the convoy entered the village, residents spotted two Serbs in the vehicles who had been involved in the Krusha massacre itself. This sparked panic amongst

the residents. According to village representatives and local activist, Agron Limani, these were people who had separated Albanian children from their mothers on the 26th March 1999. One local women, Nexhmije Batusha, whose two sons had been taken from her by one of the individuals in the car, and who also lost her husband in the massacre, approached the convoy once it had stopped and requested that the UNMIK policeman let her talk to the Serbs. Other women joined her, wanting to ask those in the car what had happened to the bodies of their husbands and children.

When the UNMIK policemen refused to let the women speak to the Serbs, they became distraught and sat down in the road to obstruct the vehicles. When they refused to move and let the vehicles pass, UNMIK police officers beat a number of them with riot batons, whilst other women began throwing stones at the UNMIK vehicles. Men from the village gathered around the vehicles angrily and attempted to protect the women, at which point the convey chose to leave. However, police officers threw tear gas into the crowd as they departed.

A reported 33 residents from Krusha were admitted to hospital that day, including children who had been in the school playground and were affected by tear gas. One woman had serious injuries resulting from being beaten with a baton, whilst 13 were kept under observation for suffering from what was described as psychological trauma¹²⁷.

A central issue raised by this case is that nobody in the village was informed of UNMIK's plan to send a convoy. A number of local activists and representative from this village, alongside those from outside who have worked with the women, speak English and have experience engaging with international institutions. Thus there were no barriers to consulting locally, or in planning fact-finding initiatives together. The whole case seems to have been caused by an appalling lack of judgement by the international chief police officer who coordinated the visit.

The events on this day destabilised the women. Igballe Rugova from the KWN and local activist Marta Prekpalaj who has supported the women since the war, explain that the police violence reminded the women of the violence they experienced on the day of the massacre. Prekpalaj was quoted in a press release prepared by KWN the day after the events as saying:

¹²⁷ This report is a combination of evidence provided by residents in the village, and a press release of the the Kosovo Women's Network. See KWN (2006) 'Letter to SRSG Soren Jessen-Peterson Incident in Krusha e Vogel village, Kosovo on 25 May 2006'

I saw the exact same expressions on their faces yesterday as I saw the day that their homes were burned and their family members were killed¹²⁸.

The response that the UNMIK police officer who organised the fact finding mission to Krusha gave to the villagers was that they had been *undemocratic to resort to violence* (stone throwing). He warned them that their actions could negatively influence the final status talks¹²⁹.

Local actors undermined by internationals

Local civil society actors in Kosovo report feeling undermined by the personnel of international organisations, and blame this phenomenon in part on internationals being ‘driven by their egos’.

This is tricky territory to negotiate, not least because it raises questions about the motivations and stance of local actors themselves. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that, in Kosovo, international actors have exhibited signs of the syndrome described so neatly by Tagesson (2006: 51) of wishing to see oneself as a ‘Truly Good Person’ - addicted to feeling great about oneself for being compassionate and caring about the world when nobody else does. This observation ties in with broader literature covering stance and motivation, including debates on altruism.

As seen in Chapter 2, scholars and activists have debated the degree to which one’s personal gain must balance the benefits received by those one seeks to assist. Vaux (2001) argues that there is no such thing as ‘pure motivation’, whilst De Jong (2011) suggests that being self-orientated does not necessarily undermine one’s ability to be effective in the humanitarian sector. Gandhi’s overall approach was service through self-sacrifice, and he insisted that *personal benefit must not outweigh the benefit received by others*. This ties in with Ramsbotham & Woodhouse’s (1996) principle that any intervention should be to the overall advantage of those in whose name it is carried out.

According to respondents in this study, internationals tended to get carried away with their own personal goals and agendas, at the expense of local needs. This was seen through external actors attempting to implement projects that were wholly inappropriate and doomed to fail – despite the advice of local actors. An example of this was given in Chapter 4

¹²⁸ See KWN (2006) ‘Letter to SRSJ Soren Jessen-Peterson Incident in Krusha e Vogel village, Kosovo on 25 May 2006’

¹²⁹ Ibid.

concerning the ‘reconciliation’ project. Alongside this has been observed a lack of trust in local actors, ignorance towards their capabilities, and interference into initiatives that should have been left to local actors alone.

In one case, a respondent described how members of the OSCE took over the proceedings of a meeting she had organised for local women’s groups. When she asked the OSCE staff to print the agenda she had prepared, they made substantial alternations, as she explains here:

“They brought it back and they had completely changed the idea. First of all they put their logo on it, and secondly, they had put two of their staff to speak to us. I looked at it and [expressed my surprise], but they told me that in order to support us we needed to include speakers in our meeting. I told them that if that was the case we did not need their support. They didn’t know why we were so upset!”¹³⁰

This respondent blames what happened here on ‘egos’. She explained:

“In Kosovo, international people wanted to be seen as the ones who came here and did these ‘wonderful projects’ ...in fact they would rather this than seeing the local people doing it themselves.”¹³¹

Others argued that this undermining of local actors was caused by a lack of *self-awareness* and *maturity* amongst international staff, along with limited expertise. This international respondent, who has been working with local and international NGOs in Kosovo since before the war explained,

“I would say that the problem in Kosovo was just that there were a lot of [internationals] without expertise; either professional expertise or maturity. Just maturity: in knowing how to ask questions; in knowing how to listen; in knowing how to be flexible; in knowing how to balance their needs with other people’s needs. All of these sorts of basic things; all part of what I think of as being mature.”¹³²

This returns us to Kraybill’s (2009) analysis that those of us who engage in peace work must engage also in self-reflection, and be willing to tackle our own short comings. Whilst we can’t be perfect, we must be aware of our strengths and weaknesses, for ‘that which is in our awareness can be handled responsibly’. Likewise, Curle suggests that as peace workers,

We become too easily involved with our anger and fear, caught up in our hopes, absorbed in our interests. We become these things and, however good, altruistic, or creative we may be, in doing so we lose awareness (1972: 101)

¹³⁰ Interview, 2009, Respondent 3

¹³¹ Interview, 2009, Respondent 3

¹³² Interview, 2008, Respondent 8

One final story I will share in this section, which illustrates this point, concerns a local organisation, which attempted to initiate a returns project in Northern Kosovo in collaboration with other local NGOs. However, this project was undermined by a lack of support from international actors. It should be noted that the director of the NGO in question is undoubtedly one of the leading peace workers in the region, who has gained international recognition for her work in Kosovo.

She explains here what happened, and emphasised that this was only one of many examples of when the international personnel in agencies undermined the work her organisation was trying to do at the grassroots level,

“In 2005 we worked very hard with a community in a particularly tense area of Kosovo to talk with people about how they feel about the return of certain citizens to this area. These people had been forced out during the war. We managed to foster a really nice and pleasant atmosphere in this process and to gain their consent. We created a group and wrote a letter: a request, which we took to the international people overseeing and facilitating the returns process. All of us wanted to say, “Hey guys, we should do something here; something positive here is possible”. But these organisations had all the power over this process and they didn’t give us permission. There are several reasons for this: but one of them was that internationals never ever considered a local as a potential partner – *not ever* - at least not as an *equal partner*.”¹³³

Some local actor in Kosovo describe themselves as feeling burnt out as a result of constantly challenging members of international organisations in order to get their work done. This respondent explains:

“I am in this situation: I am burnt out – I am very burnt out now. It is not the work, it is this ignorance of internationals in Kosova (...) and I am really burnt out. That takes energy to fight them back. (...) It [takes] so much energy because anger is involved.”¹³⁴

Financial gain and life-style choices amongst internationals

Alongside egos, are concerns over the way in which international actors made substantial financial gains in Kosovo through receipt of salaries from international organisations.

¹³³ Interview, 2008, Respondent 1

¹³⁴ Interview, 2008, Respondent 3

It is felt that the personal gain of these individuals outweighed the level of development and change observed in Kosovo over the years. High salaries contrasted sharply with local wages, as whilst a local teacher in 2002 was earning in the region of €150 euros a month, a young international professional employed by an agency such as the UN, was earning in the region of 20-25 times more than a local civil service wage (IMF 2005:8). This was alongside a living allowance covering most in-country costs such as housing and food, and other benefits. Those occupying more senior positions earned considerably more. Additionally, Europeans employed under the so-called United Nations Volunteers (UNV) scheme were often better off than they would have been in employment at home. This led to jealousy, and the proliferation of cynical attitudes about outsiders at the grassroots.

Much of the anger radiating around the issue of salaries concerned the estimated amounts of money allocated to Kosovo by international funds, which subsequently left again through salaries and project costs, rather than being channelled directly into Kosovo's development. One member of civil society calculated that of ten million Deutschmarks allocated to grassroots women's projects alone, 70% was spent on international salaries and the project costs of international organisations, whilst 30% went directly to indigenous NGOs; some of whom she explained, 'struggle on €200 a month' to run their organisations,

“...the meat stays with international organisations and the bones go to women's organisations in Kosova.”¹³⁵

Whilst such estimates may seem exaggerated, they are in fact feasible considering data published by the International Monetary Fund revealing that within UNMIK, the estimated total spending during 2003 was €356 million, and that €258 million of this was spent on international salaries alone, representing 72% (IMF 2005: 46).

As those at the grassroots observed this phenomenon, it fuelled negativity and the sense that the international peace building scene was overtly self-serving. The following NGO director, whilst recognising the needs for internationals to be paid, questioned the motivations behind some of the positions created in Kosovo,

“...people can only go for so long as volunteers from crisis to crisis. They may have homes, families, children going to university, necessity to fund retirement, etc. But, on the other hand, lots of the work [in Kosovo] is more about creating lucrative positions,

¹³⁵ Interview, 2008, Respondent 3

where people may earn more with lower taxes, etc. than they may ever earn at home. This creates the new colonialists.”¹³⁶

Another representative of a long-serving local organisation became so angry when discussing this issue that he described members of the international community as “vultures” feeding off local misfortune¹³⁷.

Beyond salaries is the issue of lifestyle choices amongst the staff of international NGOs and agencies, which set international workers apart and again generated negative attitudes within local communities. In Kosovo, international workers often rented large houses with more rooms than needed in affluent areas of town (for example, in Dragodan, Prishtinë/Priština) and such areas metamorphosed into exclusive expatriate territories. International workers drove four wheel drive cars when their trips did not necessitate the use of such vehicles, and even the drinking of bottled water rather than the tap water that most local people can afford, was noted as a behaviour which set international workers apart. Thus international workers were described as having created their own elite group, as this respondent explains,

“There’s such a detachment. In a way these international organisations have created a caste, if you will: a caste; a clique; a clan; a separate group...”¹³⁸

Another reflection was that,

“[Internationals] got used to eating every day in nice restaurants, being driven in large cars, overriding local colleagues, making decisions for which they have no long-term liability. It created a poisonous atmosphere.”¹³⁹

Kruhonja argues that organisations working in such settings need to develop some rules of behaviour in relation to the people with which they work and the experiences they have been through. She suggests that,

If you are working as a rescue team in a crisis area where people are cold and hungry, you do not dress in expensive clothes and eat expensive food. If you are involved in mediation and reconciliation processes, you also need to work on conflict within your own organization (Ingelstam 2001: 23-24).

Additionally, in Kosovo, the lifestyle choices of international actors (which were often endorsed by the organisations and agencies for which they worked) in many cases removed individuals from the local context, and created a distance between their own needs and those of local communities. For example, whilst those living in the villages close to

¹³⁶ Interview, 2008, Respondent 11

¹³⁷ Interview, 2008, Respondent 26

¹³⁸ Interview, 2008, Respondent 8

¹³⁹ Interview, 2011, Respondent 11

Prishtinë/Priština have experienced severe power cuts and water shortages throughout the ten years following the war, internationals working in NGOs and agencies in the capital on the whole possessed generators, and earned enough money to rely on bottled water. And whilst the poorest sections of Kosovo's society (usually those living in rural communities) have had difficulties in meeting their basic nutritional needs - estimated at 15% of the populations, whilst 45% live on less than €45 a month (World Bank Press Release 2009), international workers received salaries and benefits which would be enviable in Western Europe, whilst eating regularly in restaurants was the norm. Added to this is the fact that very few internationals succeeded in learning local languages, (a factor which reflects in part the short contracts served in Kosovo), and this contributed to the distance between internationals and local communities and their needs. During 2005, for example, OSCE ceased providing Albanian language classes, due to a lack of demand¹⁴⁰.

Whilst it may be unrealistic to expect an assimilation of international NGO workers and local communities, what was needed was a greater level of engagement with local communities, in order that outsiders understood local needs more deeply, and became better equipped to negotiate the local landscape. In time this would have led to greater levels of empathy and helped to build respect and understanding between local actors working for change, and the personnel of international organisations.

Neutrality, compassion and empathy

The distance that was generated between the international staff of NGOs and agencies, and local communities relates also to the themes of neutrality and impartiality.

As seen in Chapter 2, neutrality essentially concerns attitudes, whilst impartiality relates to behaviour (Weller 1997). Neutrality means not taking sides or engaging in controversies of political or ideological nature, and impartiality is understood as working in a way that is guided solely people's *needs* (ICRC 2011: 35). The attitude of neutrality is one that has been widely criticised in relation humanitarian intervention. Some critics argue that it is not possible to remain neutral in conflict, and thus the notion of neutrality is a sham (Wallace 2003). Other critics argue that these terms generate an unhelpful degree of remoteness between actors and local people. For example, Kruhonja (Ingelstam 2001: 25) argues that through impartiality, *distance* is encouraged – when what is needed instead is *compassion*

¹⁴⁰ Author's observation.

and *inclusion*. Essentially Kruhonya believes, as does Hahn (2007:9), that by engaging in other people's struggles one must shed one's discrimination between 'them and us'. This does not mean excluding others in the process, however, we must become close to those we seek to assist and break down the boundaries that exists between us.

Whilst the international mission has made a point of emphasising its neutral stance, this has sent an unhelpful message to international actors engaging in Kosovo, who often struggle to make the distinction described by Kruhonya and Hahn above, between becoming *deeply involved in local* people's lives, and not *excluding others as a result*. In remaining fearful of doing either, they have essentially distanced themselves from the daily life of citizens. I would argue also that for some this reflects a wider fear of becoming involved in an unknown culture.

Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers (2006) conducted a study in which they analysed the manner in which international actors have engaged with local narratives, in particular in relation to the Jashari memorial site in Prekaz/Prekaz. This site commemorates the March 1998 massacre. Di Lellio and Schwandner-Sievers argue that outsiders have kept their distance from this site for fear of being seen to take sides. They explain:

Extensive observation and interviews confirm that the majority of the 'internationals' (...) have little or no memory of the March 1998 events, let alone any intention of visiting Prekaz. If they do know of Prekaz, they keep their distance – literally and figuratively – from the site. A senior international official accompanied us once to the Memorial but refused to leave the car for fear of being seen at the site. 'They don't want to be perceived as taking sides', a Western diplomat thus explained the attitude of most of his colleagues (2006: 525).

The observations provided here are typical of many internationals working in Kosovo.

However, by avoiding becoming close to communities in Kosovo, and crucially by failing to engage with the diverse aspects of the local culture (from history through to habits), it is very difficult to engage on a sufficiently deep level with local people's needs. Or to understand the elements that fuel the conflict. This returns us to the issue of not learning local languages and the short time frames that international workers have spent in the territory. Kruhonya has even argued that if internationals were to form close relationship with local people, they would stay longer (Inglestam 2001: 26). If internationals stayed longer, projects at the grassroots would have been stronger, and there would have been less resentment at the grassroots. Thus all these themes are all interconnected.

Likewise, being compassionate is essentially about *inclusion* (including others in our passion if translated literally), whilst empathy from a feminist perspective is interpreted as seeing and feeling with the other (Noddings 1993). All these qualities, which seem so fundamental to engaging in some sort of process of change at the grassroots, appear to have been missing in many cases.

Competition, rivalry and a lack of inclusiveness

One final concern I will touch on here is the competition and rivalry that existed amongst organisations and individuals engaged in peace building in Kosovo. This concern has been highlighted in Kosovo in other studies (Bekaj 2008; Pula 2005; CDA 2007), and in relation to the peace building field in general (Francis 2010; Kraybill 2009). Whilst this issue affected the civil society sector in Kosovo across the board, as competition and rivalry was seen between international organisations and between local organisations alike, I examine this issue here from the perspective of how it has taken place *between* insiders and outsiders.

One major complaint amongst local organisations was that in order to maintain their *raison d'être* in Kosovo, international organisations held onto responsibilities rather than relinquishing them to local NGOs. To illustrate this point one respondent gave the example of an international organisation that closely guarded their role to oversee certain youth initiatives, a responsibility granted to them by the European Union. When the time came for this organisation to leave Kosovo, it took with it all the skills and capacity related to the initiative with it, leaving no organisations in Kosovo capable of fulfilling its role. The respondent argued that such a role should have been handed over to a local organisation much earlier, but that this did not happen as it would have placed the international organisation in a precarious position,

“I do not wish to blame international organisations – but one big complaint that we all need to be aware of is that everybody has taken care of his own baby; everybody has taken care of their own project. I’m not sure that there are many organisations aware of the whole picture.”¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Interview, 2008, Respondent 15

Typology: attitudes, behaviours, and consequences amongst external actors in Kosovo

Above I have presented a number of negative attitudes and behaviours identified by respondents amongst internationals in Kosovo. Provided here is a typology, which summarises these, alongside the consequences in Kosovo at the grassroots.

Attitudes, Behaviour & Consequences Amongst International Actors **Table 9**

Attitude	Behaviour (example)	Consequences
Lack of Commitment	Short contracts. lack of local knowledge. Not learning local languages.	Undermined projects at the grassroots. Gave the impression of a lack of sincerity. Led to careless errors and damaged trust between insiders & outsiders.
Lack of Sensitivity Towards Local Population	Aggressive behaviour towards vulnerable groups (as in the case of Krusha).	Undermined peace building. In the case of Krusha it re-traumatised the women.
Egos/Lack of Maturity/Low Self-Awareness	Railroading local actors. Being a “pioneer” and initiating own projects at expense of local needs.	Anger, frustration and even burn out amongst local actors. Undermined local peace building efforts. Strengthened divisions between insiders/outsideers.
Peace building as a Career and Lifestyle	High Salaries earned. Expensive lifestyles.	Created a separate caste. Removed internationals from the needs of local people. Widespread anger at the grassroots. Sense of injustice.
Neutrality	Avoiding engagement with local events and communities. Keeping one’s distance.	Deepened distrust and divisions between insiders/outsideers. Perpetuated a lack of commitment. Amongst outsiders, and a lack of understanding about how to engage effectively at the grassroots.

The issues presented in the chapter are not new, in that contemporary peace building missions are widely been exposed for their failure to engage holistically at the grassroots, and for corrupting local activism. At the same time, there is a need to emphasise that this is an issue that resides in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals as well as in organisations, and the wider ‘structures’.

Whilst every local respondent I spoke with wanted to share an angry story of unfair treatment at the hands of ‘internationals’ many also described people who had had very positive impacts on their lives. These were the ‘good’ internationals that stayed for longer periods or who learnt languages. Who did not impose their ideas onto people, and who offered support. Crucially, they showed a high level of care and involvement in local people’s lives, and knew how to engage sensitively in the local context. These are not qualities that can be learnt through reading a handbook. Yet they suggest that how we are within ourselves, along with the choices that we make, have a fundamental impact on our ability to affect change at this level.

Conclusion

In this chapter I provided an analysis of the dominant negative attitudes and behaviours identified amongst international actors in Kosovo by actors at the grassroots. I argue that my findings suggest that external actors have been too removed from local communities as demonstrated by the short contracts they have served and by the fact they have largely lived away from communities and have failed to learn local languages. This had bred cynicism and bitterness at the grassroots, whereby actors frequently identify external actors as driven by their own needs and goals to a level that is perceived as disproportionate to the benefits that have been bestowed upon Kosovo’s communities. I argue that external actors needed to make a much deeper commitment to Kosovo, forged on a willingness to transcend insider-outsider divides to a much deeper degree

Chapter Seven: Grassroots Peace Building in Kosovo: Adding up to ‘Peace Writ Large’

“I think that change at the grassroots can have more of an effect than change at the political level because it is the next generation.”¹⁴²

“You have many young people who have learned many things during this chaos of international intervention and presence. We have many young people who now know things and who are very dynamic. (...) Here you see a mass of people who are willing”¹⁴³

Introduction

Emphasized throughout this thesis has been that, since the war, the international mission has pursued peace at the grassroots through initiatives aimed at fostering a multi-ethnic society. Amongst wider attempts to build a democratic polity, establish rule of law, promote democratic elections, and establish a functioning economy; it was the agenda of multi-ethnicity that was felt most strongly at the grassroots. The overarching objective of peace building since the war has been to ensure Kosovo’s stability and the stability of other countries in the region. Like all ‘good’ contemporary peace building missions, it has been essentially ‘preventative’, reflecting the analysis that as most peace agreements fail, the goal of peace building should be to prevent a reoccurrence of violence (Smith 2004).

As shown in Chapter 4, in the initial crisis period following the war, peace building at the grassroots played out as little more than efforts aimed at bringing relief and support to affected communities, and promoting peace as a *sentiment*: a symbol of a different and better future. However from 2001, and 2002 in particular, the focus shifted to the more strategic employment of the grassroots, as actors at this level were recognised as potentially supportive of broader peace building agendas - the returns process in particular, prioritised by Steiner’s benchmarks.

As shown in Chapter 5, a contact approach (forged on a superficial understanding of contact hypothesis) was the method favoured in promoting multi-ethnicity, and the focus was

¹⁴² Interview, 2009, Respondent 31

¹⁴³ Interview, 2009, Respondent 9

overwhelmingly on youth. Yet these initiatives took place in a hostile and politicised atmosphere, where deepening coexistence was hindered by factors such as the lack of transitional justice measures, and the limbo created by the failure to resolve final status. The kind of widespread ethnic integration promoted by external actors forged on multiculturalism was also unrealistic considering the depths of divisions; prejudices; and geography that keep people separate, alongside language and cultural polarity.

I have also highlighted in previous chapters that a *hunger* exists amongst young people in Kosovo to broaden their horizons: to access more opportunities and resources and simply to 'live a normal life'. This desire needs to be understood in the broader context of Kosovo being a country crippled by unemployment, poverty, and restrictions on international and regional travel; alongside the wider burden of grief and bitterness felt by those affected by the violence. However, this desire to live 'a normal life' is not only indivisible from peace and peace building, it represents a great opportunity.

As identified by respondents in Chapter 6, the lack of critical thinking skills and the disempowerment seen amongst young people in Kosovo stems in part from the 'bank like' education system, alongside the limited possibilities people have had in the past to encounter difference and access resources and opportunities. Respondents insist that it is essentially through young people broadening their horizons that they feel empowered to think more critically about the world around them, in order that they may adjust negative attitudes and behaviour shaped by features of the conflict. Creating an integrated society in Kosovo, fostering reconciliation, or simply deepening coexistence requires a high level of *motivation* and *willingness* to overcome the factors that divide people. This needs to be nurtured in ways other than through direct inter-ethnic contact.

In this chapter, I argue that peace building at the grassroots is a process that begins with every individual. I assert that grassroots peace building needs to be rooted in personal empowerment, and that it is from the level of the individual that wider change ripples out. It has been argued that peace building, which focuses solely on change at the individual/personal level but never links or translates into action at the socio-political level *has no discernible effect on peace*. Peace building activities if they are to have an impact must therefore translate into actions at the socio-political level (CDA 2009). Whilst this makes sense in the context of Kosovo, it is helpful also to view peace building in Kosovo as something that occurs at the grassroots over generations, rather than within the timeframe of

the projects of NGOs. Thus the immediate impact on broader peace may initially appear limited, however my findings show that it has the potential to gather momentum over time.

I begin this chapter with an analysis of formal capacity building activities in Kosovo. I then argue that an *informal* type of capacity building has taken place since the war – one that occurred through the mass engagement of young people in ad-hoc activities organized by international organisations, and through encounters between locals and internationals. Respondents here assert that it is through having their horizons broadened (be it through travel, reading, or interactions with new people) that they have adjusted their attitudes and behaviours. I present one small example of how peace at the level of the individual is adding up to peace on a broader scale, using a case study from a village in central Kosovo.

Capacity building in Kosovo

As explained in Chapter 2, formal capacity building largely took place in Kosovo after the war through training workshops. Training was conducted in areas such as: project management; English language and computer skills; fundraising; financial management; or evaluation and monitoring capabilities. Alongside this were a smaller number of activities focused on imparting conflict resolution skills. The goal was to better equip local NGOs and individuals to carry out activities, independent of the external support of international organisations.

However, despite the substantial attention given to this, capacity building efforts have largely been evaluated negatively in Kosovo:

“The money invested into the capacity building of the civil society in Kosovo (...) in the last ten years is wasted money,”¹⁴⁴

explained one respondent, whose local NGO was very much on the receiving end of such initiatives. The reason he gave for this waste of money, an opinion widely shared amongst respondents, was that training fell short of being little more than the subject of workshops. Short workshops were largely not followed up with coaching or mentoring. He explains,

“Capacity building in the manner that it was done in Kosovo meant that a donor would provide one, two or three training sessions in a period of one, two or six months and the donor would provide a computer and printer and that’s that. We had no follow up, we had no mentoring, and we had no coaching.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Interview, 2009, Respondent 7

¹⁴⁵ Interview, 2009, Respondent 7

Another observer of capacity building in Kosovo described it as ‘the lazy man’s way out’ to programming amongst international NGOs,

“One of the things that has been a problem is the notion of following through and following up. Consistency and depth. If not a conclusion (you can’t really have a conclusion) but at least another level. You have a training or a workshop – you introduce new concepts – but then what? You have to do something with that.”¹⁴⁶

These findings mirror those that emerged from a comprehensive study of capacity building carried out in Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo (Sterland 2006), which concluded that in Kosovo people felt that they had been ‘trained to death’, but that the impact of capacity building had been marred by factors such as a lack of local knowledge amongst trainers, and an absence of a long-term approach, including the absence of mentoring beyond a short-term project. In Kosovo, capacity building was directed at fulfilling a specific purpose (related to a project) for example, but rarely succeeded in advancing capacity in ways that were more wide reaching.

Building capacity through informal encounters at the grassroots

Despite the failings of capacity building through formal training and workshops described above, the presence of the international community in Kosovo has left a significant mark on many individuals; increasing their capacity, particularly young people, who I focus on here. However, this capacity has largely not come about through formal workshops and training forged explicitly around this goal. It has instead been the result of young people coming into contact with individuals from other countries such as the facilitators of projects, volunteers, and even members of KFOR, which has affected a shift in their thinking and inspired and motivated them; alongside the many avenues that international organisations have offered young people to access new opportunities, and encounter new ideas and cultures.

One example of this can be seen through Kushtrim¹⁴⁷, who is in his early twenties and the head of a dynamic NGO in Prishtinë/Priština, which is involved in political lobbying. Kushtrim explained how he became so active in this field, tracing it back to his childhood. During the war Kushtrim was a refugee in a camp in Albania, where he assisted journalists to conduct interviews as an interpreter, as he spoke good English (picked up through TV and school). On return to Kosovo he sold cigarettes on the street outside school hours,

¹⁴⁶ Interview, 2008, Respondent 8

¹⁴⁷ Not his real name

particularly to KFOR soldiers, and through speaking with them regularly advanced his English skills. In 1999, Bill Clinton visited his city and he was one of two children selected to meet him at a formal event, thanks to his good English skills, and because he was known by KFOR. This led to him becoming somewhat well known in the city, and he was invited to help out at a local radio station on a show for young people. Through the radio station he became involved in the activities of an NGO engaged in debating activities, along with a 'Youth Forum' funded by an international agency; and he began travelling through these debating activities, which included visiting the United States. He explains,

“One month in America and then coming back and attending some more activities - this all helped me a lot - to get to know new things - and this is how it all started. In 2005 I created a local NGO with friends in Ferazaj, which focused on citizen action.”¹⁴⁸

Kushrim then moved to Prishtinë/Priština in 2008 and began running his current NGO.

Another respondent, himself the director of a Kosovo-wide youth programme describes this process as one of 'opening up', which he deems to result less from the formal activities of international organisations, and more from the mutual encounters that have taken place between local people and those from outside, which has served as a catalyst,

“I can speak for the Albanian community: It helped us to get out of the 'cave'. By this I mean years of isolation, be that through Tito's Yugoslavia, the Milošević years, and finally [the war]. So I think there were big achievements in terms of opening people up. For example, many young people - they are not interested in going to war anymore, they are interested in development; education; getting a job; getting a degree; learning a language; starting a band; playing music. You have increased numbers of artists and musicians. The quality of artwork is much better than it used to be. People had their minds opened up. It helped them to open up – it helped *me* to open up. I was very different eight years ago. People are not recognizing this.”¹⁴⁹

This suggests that rather than evaluating the quasi 'invasion' of international personnel in Kosovo entirely negatively, we should look to how it has led to an informal exchange of ideas and cultures taking place, which is the result of a divergence of two worlds. The respondent continues,

“This would never happen if we didn't have this sort of interaction. We didn't learn from UN. We didn't learn from OSCE and these sort of political organisations. I think that those at the political level (be that Kosovo government, be that UNMIK, be that

¹⁴⁸ Interview, 2009, Respondent 17

¹⁴⁹ Interview, 2008, Respondent 9

now EULEX) have more kind of hampered these efforts than helped them but they didn't stop that. Because this kind of interaction has a kind of natural flow. *To a large extent I think that peace building efforts have worked because of interaction.* You see all these young people who are moving forward, developing. (...) They are not focused so much on history. They are focused on learning, on absorbing values, on meeting friends, which are not necessarily from Kosovo. I see a lot of mixed marriages. So, to give you an example: one friend had married an Orthodox Christian from Albania. Another with a US citizen, another friend has a relationship with a German, I have married an Austrian Kosovar. It is really about opening up and people do not appreciate the value of this. But I am quite sure that people will appreciate the value of this in ten or fifteen years time”¹⁵⁰.

A third respondent, Veprim, whose experiences I shared in Chapter 5, explains here how through working with one particular international NGO he began socialising with the international staff and volunteers, eventually sharing a house with them, and how this influenced him also,

I copied a lot of [their] lifestyle; I copied some behaviour (...) I used this approach with myself: since 2005 I wouldn't feel good if I didn't buy a book or read something, you know. So this is how I planted in my brain this culture...yeah, I'm happy that I had the chance to stay with constructive people (...). I have some friends who are students and I'm shocked when I sometimes hear them talking. And then I stop and say to myself, 'I think you were at this point a few years ago also...but now you are not because of all this participation; all this reading...'”¹⁵¹

This informal mixing, which goes beyond the confines of peace building 'projects', may not have been widespread, but it was significant enough for respondents to cite it in terms of an 'unofficial' kind of peace building (described by one respondent also as a 'peace building side-effect') that has occurred, which has had at its core the personal development and transformation of individuals.

This theme of peace building 'side-effects' has been discussed in relation to a different but nevertheless relevant context. When activists from peace groups across the Former Yugoslavia were asked to evaluate what they had gained from training workshops, for example, they emphasized that more than *techniques* it was the side-effects: in the form of support and in 'drawing strength' (See Clark 2005). Similarly, individuals in Kosovo

¹⁵⁰ Interview, 2008, Respondent 9

¹⁵¹ Interview, 2010, Respondent 12

describe having undergone a process of personal empowerment, which was not the stated goal of many initiatives in Kosovo, but which has been their effect. In conflict transformation, the emphasis is often placed upon the notion of fostering ‘inner’ or ‘personal’ power, as this offers the opportunity for people to grow beyond a victim identity, and to participate and take greater responsibility for affecting change in the world around them (Clark 2005).

Capacity building and empowerment through volunteer-led grassroots activities

Alongside the informal encounters described above, which have led to the transformation and ‘opening up’ of members of a generation of young people through a combination of involvement in international programmes and a process of informal ‘mixing’ at the grassroots; are the sustained efforts of certain grassroots NGOs. Whilst these organisations have affected similar transformations amongst young people to those described above; how this has occurred can be more readily mapped.

I focus here on two such organisations, both international, and my analysis is based on talking at length with those involved as facilitators and participants in their programmes, along with those from the broader civil society scene who have observed their efforts. I begin by examining their experiences from two perspectives: firstly from the perspective of *how* these organisations have had a transformative effect on individuals in terms of their approach, and, secondly, how individual transformation (the sort described both in the examples above, and given here) is having a ‘rippling out’ effect on peace in Kosovo. This has wider implications for the debate of ‘Peace Writ Large’. For the sake of the anonymity of respondents I refer to these two organisations here as ‘A’ and ‘B’. I go into minimal detail regarding the content of each organisation’s projects due to constraints in space; however I focus on their *approaches* to implementing programmes at the grassroots.

Organisation A began operating in Kosovo in 1999, having been active in the region from the early 90s, in the refugee camps in Croatia and Bosnia, and later, during the Kosovo crisis, in Albania and Macedonia. The approach of this organisation was to place international volunteers from around the world in communities throughout Kosovo, who lived predominantly with host families. The ethos of Organisation A was that through volunteers living closely with communities they could support individuals within these communities to implement what were termed as ‘social reconstruction’ projects

collaboratively; with the goal of having a healing and transformative impact on Kosovo from the grassroots up. The majority of the international volunteers were young people themselves, between the ages of 18 and 30 years old. The director explains,

“[We] believed that person-to-person contact with aid workers who came to work as friends and neighbors, might help restore community life in ways that emergency aid and political support alone could not.”¹⁵²

Organisation B began working in Kosovo in 2000, and developed a short-term arts project, which due to its success was expanded into a Kosovo-wide programme (an example of scaling-up), which ran for six years. Those who took the lead in this programme were predominantly international volunteers, alongside a strong team of local facilitators who worked also as volunteers and were highly dedicated. Additionally there was a small core of paid international staff. This organisation took a value-based approach to peace building, through which is sought to encourage young people to become active in serving their communities, whilst also participating in arts initiatives such as dance performances with ‘social development’ themes.

The local young people who have emerged from being closely involved with these two organisations, either because they lived in the communities where Organisation A placed volunteers (often small, isolated, minority communities), or because they took a very active role in the arts activities initiated by Organisation B becoming facilitators themselves; have become highly skilled and motivated young adults, whose capacity is recognized within the wider sphere of Kosovo’s civil society, as this respondent explains,

“They have influenced so many people in Kosovo. They’ve inspired them and I’m really motivated by them. You can see what is happening with these people: they are all over; in different kinds of NGOs and different kinds of projects.”¹⁵³

Those involved in these organisations share many capabilities: from high levels of English language and project management skills, to a clear motivation for initiating projects with social development/peace building goals; as well as possessing specific skills in the arts and media. For example, amongst them is a documentary filmmaker who runs an annual film festival in Prishtina/Priština and trains youth in media skills; several individuals who have taken up internships at institutions such as the Council of Europe; and recipients of educational scholarships within Kosovo and abroad. Several individuals from both Organisations A and B now collaboratively run a multi-ethnic peace organisation, working

¹⁵² Taken from Organisation’s promotional material.

¹⁵³ Interview, 2008, Respondent 9

across communities in Kosovo. The leaders of this NGO come from different communities and backgrounds (Roma, Albanian, Serbian - rural/urban, etc.) as well as from Serbia itself. Crucially, these young people have *chosen* to come together in forming a multi-ethnic NGO, and its mission as a peace organisation is explicit.

In seeking to analyse how the effect of these two organisations has been so impactful on the individuals concerned, it is possible to identify seven common factors, each of which I will analyse here. To summarize, these are that these organisations: 1) understood that conflict is rooted in broader attitudes and behaviours, and not in relationships themselves; 2) sought to transcend insider-outsider divides; 3) worked through volunteers, thus inspired volunteerism; 4) made a sustained commitment to the same individuals and geographical areas over an extended period; 5) were reflective and consultative in their work; 6) had a strong ‘ethic of care’; and 7) were ‘resource-sensitive’.

1. Both Organisations understood the conflict as rooted in the broader attitudes and behaviours of individuals rather than taking inter-ethnic relations as the starting point. They did not work head-on with what have been identified as conflict factors (e.g. inter-ethnic relations, the need for reconciliation, etc.) and avoided emphasizing multi-ethnicity as either an approach or a goal in their programmes:

Neither of these organisations forced individuals together for multi-ethnic activities. Organisation A primarily worked with communities separately, however, because the organisation was active across communities, an inevitable amount of mixing went on between the young people involved in their projects from different communities. This was largely spontaneous and informal, such as meeting in head office, or on training days, whilst the director of Organisation A remains cynical about the positive effects of the few initiatives that were intentionally multi-ethnic.

Organisation B also worked with communities separately, whilst facilitating some mixed groups. However, their focus was on *common interests*, rather than on issues related to the conflict or ideological goals concerning multi-ethnicity. The director explains,

“We were very clear on our approach: that we were not trying to talk about conflict, we were talking about people and their communities, and their societies, and what they can do to serve them.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Interview, 2009, Respondent 31

However, through the mixed groups, the director explains that there were some positive results in building inter-ethnic relations, yet emphasizes that these were ‘side-effects’,

“The best story I can tell you is that we had one guy who was a KLA soldier and we had another guy who fought on the other side, and they actually discovered that they were fighting in the same village at the same time on the opposing sides during the war and they somehow became really good friends in the process of the project. But this was a *side-effect* - it is not an intention - something that you try to achieve.”¹⁵⁵

Crucially, fostering inter-ethnic relations was not the stated goal of their programmes. Both of these organisations were seeking to raise young people’s capacities, expand their knowledge, and encourage them to become active citizens, beyond the narrow frame of the conflict, with the awareness that in the long-term they may *choose* to take on some of the bigger issues that Kosovo’s society faces, including prejudices and divisions.

The directors of both these organisations explained *why* it has been so important to work with communities separately; whilst bringing individuals together through common interests, and not seeking to talk about the conflict issues ‘head-on’. The director of Organisation B explains,

“I strongly believe in that approach: I think that if we emphasize the labels - or the fragmented categories that we have of people - then it is always going to be limited. Then it is like, “ooh let’s bring the two sides together and we can talk about the conflict.” Just the fact that you have to label the two sides and you have to bring the Serbs and the Albanians, and they are going to talk from *their* side: it is conflictive in itself. You are not transcending that notion. We did bring people together but not in that fashion. So the whole idea was to have a common purpose and for people to work together. As People! And yeah, they can be Albanians, Serbs, whatever, but there is *no emphasis on that* because it is about transcending that, right? So it’s about having a common purpose and forgetting that...to transcend that and to not need to label. I should talk from myself, it should be void of talking from my party or a certain interest group (...) So it was in this spirit.”¹⁵⁶

Likewise, the Director of Organisation A explains,

“One of the aspects of peace building is changing the way that people think about what they do; how they look at what they are doing and who they are. Hopefully through this they take more responsibility for their lives. They will get inspired by

¹⁵⁵ Interview, 2009, Respondent 31

¹⁵⁶ Interview, 2009, Respondent 31

possibilities, in such a way that the aspects of conflict which are based on poisoned thinking may have less of a hold.”¹⁵⁷

Another respondent, beyond these two organisations, involved in peace building in Kosovo in the region over a sustained period echoed these views, and it is worth bringing in his insights here also. His organisation has been facilitating summers schools in universities across the Former Yugoslavia since the Bosnian war, including in Kosovo. He explains here why it is important not to address the conflict issues and crucially *inter-ethnic relations* ‘head-on’ through peace building efforts,

“So what we don’t believe in is going head-to-head. Bringing youth together, make a campfire, bring a guitar and then love each other; hug: this is not what we are doing! That is how we started in 1994 and it is what actually - completely and disastrously - failed. We organised courses in Tuzla; we organised some practical stuff like economic development. We organised some courses on ‘how to love thy neighbour’, ‘inter-ethnic relations’ etc., and in the end all the foreigners came and met together talking about multi-ethnicity and how it’s great and all that; and all the local students went to the economic development and maths classes. And we kind of realised that what we are organising here is not what these people want. So then we started organising more economic development and maths classes and then people in these classes would meet there and then outside of class they would talk about other topics like, “hey, you’re from that other community, how is it there?” etc. and it would kind of come more naturally - *if they wanted it to*; and we found that much more constructive actually than forcing people together, which had the opposite effect.”¹⁵⁸

To summarize therefore: these organisations worked with communities separately, and approached the conflict as something beyond inter-ethnic relations, recognizing barriers to positive peace as rooted first and foremost in the attitudes of individuals. They focused on common goals and purposes across communities and never sought to talk about the conflict directly. Instead they offered young people the opportunity to ‘become inspired by possibilities’, thus being ‘opened up to difference’ with the goal of affecting more general shifts in thinking (this links in with notions of personal empowerment). Whilst these organisations presented opportunities for individuals from different communities to meet, they never made this the primary goal of their projects.

¹⁵⁷ Interview, 2008, Respondent 11

¹⁵⁸ Interview, 2009, Respondent 2

Whilst critics in existing research on peace building in Kosovo argue that failing to *talk about the conflict* has been detrimental to peace, and that we need to directly tackle the issues that divide people head on (CDA 2006), respondents here emphasized that a ‘talking it through’ approach to tackling conflict though potentially effective, is limited. To begin with experts in conflict resolution and mediation, of which there have unfortunately been few in Kosovo, must facilitate this. The director of Organisation A, whilst acknowledging the value of conflict resolution activities in Kosovo emphasised that this approach cannot be the sole approach to peace building in Kosovo. He stated:

“The question is whether or not you have the skills – who has the skills? The issue is which box we are opening, and do we have the ability to close it if we open the wrong box? I think we're always encouraging a small degree of exploration but not going further than the boxes that we are able to handle.”¹⁵⁹

Secondly, this approach predisposes that individuals are willing, and crucially able (i.e. process the critical capabilities) to examine the issues at stake in a constructive way. Even with more conflict resolution experts available in Kosovo, this approach is always going to be limited, because it predisposes that individuals are interested and willing to talk about the conflict, when many are not, and because it requires a certain type of person to engage wholeheartedly in such a process. In reality this approach is only going to appeal to a section of the population, thus it cannot be the only approach to peace building.

The findings here also raises questions about the assumption that conflict transformation must take place through, and revolve around relationships (Lederach 1998), or that without addressing the wider drivers of the conflict (justice, missing persons, and social-economic grievances), grassroots efforts to build peace risk being ineffective in contributing to ‘peace write large’ (CDA 2006); concerns I return to below, when I examine a notion of peace ‘rippling out’.

2. Transcended insider-outsider divides

Organisation A placed international volunteers in communities where they lived in host families. These volunteers learnt local languages and participated in the everyday life of the community, including family birthdays, marriages, and national and cultural celebrations. They worked collaboratively with the local young people in the communities to initiate projects (e.g. film and arts projects, setting up kindergartens, etc.) thus forged

¹⁵⁹ Interview, 2008, Respondent 11

friendships and working relationship based on mutual needs. There was a degree of *reliance* between the international volunteers and the local community, as volunteers were to a degree isolated and therefore sought supportive friendships within the community alongside genuinely productive and collaborative working relationships. From the other side, the local young people were ‘hungry’ to access to new opportunities, and therefore the international volunteer served as a bridge to new realities beyond the at times suffocating confines of their communities (particularly in enclaves), and presented opportunities to learn new skills such as in English and media. Because the volunteers were not receiving salaries, they often subsisted at a similar level to the local communities (eating the same food, and not buying expensive luxuries). The director explains the thinking behind this approach,

The volunteers live with host families in their various communities, to more closely share the realities and challenges of everyday life. They work with some of the most difficult situations of daily life. They work to build local grassroots activism and commitment so that far more people will have the courage and tools to keep working for their communities. (...) They identify problems that others do not address. They gain extraordinary experience – not least being that it is possible to do great work with intention and little else¹⁶⁰.

In a similarly vain, Organisation ‘B’ blended teams of local facilitators and international volunteers, who worked intensively together on delivering their programme, whilst the method of host families was not employed in this case. Because this organisation had a strong ‘value-based’ approach to its work, local and international volunteers were bound together through common fundamental values (e.g. serving others, equality, etc.), beyond those associated with ‘belonging’ to their home countries or nationalities.

It would be naive and inaccurate to suggest that these organisations transcended the insider-outsider dichotomy according to accepted definitions (see e.g. CDA 2004; Barnes 2006). For example, international volunteers could and did return to their home countries at the end of their placements, with a small number staying on as long-term residents in Kosovo. However, in transcending some of their ‘outsiderness’, the ability of these organisations to impact positively on communities was deepened. As we have seen in Chapter 6, deep divides between internationals and locals in Kosovo bred cynicism and resentment at the grassroots, where international workers were evaluated negatively for distancing themselves

¹⁶⁰ Taken from Organisation’s promotional material.

from local communities and for being perceived as uncaring. Not learning languages or participating in the life of communities has also been seen as a barrier to outsiders imbibing sufficient understandings of the needs of local communities and the inherent capacities of local actors.

This transcendence between insider-outsiderhood through the approaches of Organisations A and B also facilitated a process of informal ‘mixing’ at the grassroots between international volunteers and local young people and contributed to the sort of ‘opening up’ and transformation described at the beginning of this chapter. Removing false boundaries between local and international people also encouraged a view of peace building as one of global concern, beyond being something that is the concern of outsiders who parachute into places of conflict to help local people, before parachuting out again. It encouraged an atmosphere whereby individuals (insiders and outsiders) saw themselves as working within ‘a common field of human undertaking’ (to quote Edward Said¹⁶¹), beyond the false binaries of ‘local’ and ‘international’. Reflecting on this, one young local facilitator engaged in the activities of Organisation B explained,

“I don’t want to be labelled as having a name. I have tried to stop believing in nationalities anymore (...) I believe in unity in the world.”¹⁶²

Other factors such as increased trust within communities, and increased understanding of the local context amongst volunteers also resulted from this transcendence of insider-outsider divides.

2. Worked through Volunteers, thus inspired volunteerism

Before examining the role that volunteerism played within the approaches of these organisations, I revisit here the transformation that Kosovo’s civil society underwent following the end of the war, and examine volunteerism in Kosovo. As we have already seen, during the 1990s, Albanians forged a movement of civil resistance, which comprised efforts to ‘modernize’ their community by ending the tradition of blood feuds and educating rural women through literacy projects, for example. Alongside these approaches were humanitarian actions such as those carried out by the Mother Theresa Foundation in the

¹⁶¹ Said is quoted as saying, with reference to the conflict in the Middle East: ‘I urge everyone to join in and not leave the field of values, definitions, and cultures uncontested. They are certainly not the property of a few Washington officials, any more than they are the responsibility of a few Middle Eastern rulers. There is a common field of human undertaking being created and recreated, and no amount of imperial bluster can ever conceal or negate that fact’. Said cited in Roy, S. (2009) ‘Israel’s ‘Victories’ in Gaza Come at a Steep Price...’

¹⁶² Interview, 2009, Respondent 23

fields of health provision and the delivery of aid; and initiatives to monitor Human Rights abuses carried out by CDHRF. Forged in the face of Serbian oppression, Albanians fostered a united front and a strong sense of solidarity. Another driving force was the idea of volunteerism and empowerment of marginalized and disenfranchised groups (Bekaj 2008: 37). This movement was unusual in the post-communist atmosphere of the former Yugoslavia where 'volunteerism' was an uncommon phenomenon. Solidarity with the population and civil resistance against the Serbian regime were the overarching principles of civil society organizations (Bekaj 2008: 37).

Following the end of the war, civil society underwent an 'artificial stimulation' due to the sudden mass influx of foreign funds for projects aimed at building peace, preventing violence and promoting values such as Human Rights and reconciliation. The grassroots became largely 'projectized', operating within the perimeters of donor protocol and living up to the expectation of funders which required the implementation of 'time bound' initiatives, driven by results, and reliant on international partners. Many local organisations, particularly those newly created following the war, sought to mirror the image projected by international NGO of 'professionalism'; and thus a new era of professionalism at the grassroots was ushered in, whilst the indigenous spirit of volunteerism and solidarity largely fell away.

Some respondents blame the failure of the Albanian community following the end of the war to sustain the atmosphere of solidarity witnessed during the 1990s entirely on the international community itself. However, I disagree, and as Albanians themselves point out, this period of solidarity masked other deeper divisions within Albanian society (see chapters 3 and 5), thus its collapse was potentially inevitable once the immediate threat of violence was neutralized. Albanian unity has always been forged upon, and nurtured by, the notion of a common enemy.

However, evidently, the influx of foreign funds has been *deeply unsupportive* to volunteerism in Kosovo. For one thing, international organisations drew skilled people away from the indigenous civil society sector by offering them lucrative positions within NGOs (Mertus 2004). Also a new generation of social entrepreneurs saw a civil society emerge which was essentially a 'market place' (Pouligny 2005), thus civil society became 'valued' according to its capacity to provide: employment; training to enhance CVs and increase job prospects; and opportunities to engage in international travel as participants in seminars and

exchanges abroad, for example. Therefore civil society was no longer viewed solely as a channel for serving others, but as a whole sphere of profitable activity.

At the municipal level in Kosovo was a concerted effort amongst institutions to revive the spirit of solidarity and to foster volunteerism. A policy was developed over several years aimed entirely at facilitating volunteering in Kosovo, and included recruiting local youth into the EVS¹⁶³ programmes and as UNVS¹⁶⁴. However this process was seriously undermined by the climate of intense international engagement. This is illustrated here in the experience from one municipality in Western Kosovo, as described the one of the officials who oversaw it:

“We spent more than two years and a lot of effort, energy, seminars, discussions, etc., working with young people to promote volunteer work and to bring back this idea of solidarity and inter-generational solidarity, community work, etc. [And then] one ‘funny’ organisation with a lot of resources went to that region with some money and started asking young people to take part in the reconstruction of houses for returnees belonging to the Serbian Community. And they offered them one thousand Euros for this ‘voluntary work’! This was an international project manager within an organisation. He developed this ‘brilliant’ idea - and what he did was destroy our process with money. It was impossible to continue. Young people participating in *our* programme left because somebody was giving some money.”¹⁶⁵

Despite the challenges described above, Organisations A and B *did* succeed in fostering volunteerism in the places that they worked and within their teams of facilitators. This was largely because the international personnel of these organisations were themselves young volunteers, thus they were seen as role models and peers to local young people. Additionally, the young local facilitators formed strong peer groups, and the director of Organisation B emphasises that strong ‘peer identity’ within the groups was very effective. In this organisation, the local young people who became facilitators saw the dedication of the young international volunteers and were inspired by it. This local young person who became a facilitator in the organisation explains,

“They were really really dedicated [the international volunteers]. They worked for six years every Saturday and Sunday (...) But that was not just every Saturday and Sunday - they were working every day. And they barely had breaks; every day with these

¹⁶³ European Voluntary Service.

¹⁶⁴ United Nations Volunteers.

¹⁶⁵ Interview, 2008, Respondent 15

youth from everywhere. They were doing service projects. So basically their focus was studying and practicing, studying and practicing (...) So, we'd study about service and then we'd go and serve [the] community – we'd go clean up the park, we'd go collect clothes...”¹⁶⁶

In explaining how this organisation impacted on him personally he explains,

“In the beginning I was saying, ‘Why isn’t this organisation like the others?’ But then I looked at the other organisations and I said, ‘Wait, I don’t think I want the other organisations. I don’t think they have any concept. They don’t talk about anything that is beautiful in life.’ (...) I want to serve humanity. I believe that through service you can develop many values; personal values; through helping other people. I believe in that.”¹⁶⁷

These reflections are mirrored amongst respondents engaged with Organisation A, alongside those who observed their work. The following respondent, who began volunteering in Organisations A in 1999 at the age of 19, explains:

“There is a difference between [Organisations A] and other NGOs because it was all volunteers and it wasn’t money-orientated. Because all the other NGOs do their projects for money...I’m not saying everybody, but they are more project money orientated people. In [Organisations A] people were really inspired so there was something *true* there – even though it was a bit naive perhaps – there was still this sincerity and good intention. Of course I think that other NGOs also have good intentions but [Organisations A] was a little more down to earth in some ways; in their approach and because people got really involved in the communities and learnt the language. This was the difference. In a way what I feel that [Organisations A] helped me most with was just that thing of doing things to help society. Prior to this I was working in a completely different field: I was studying medicine and I worked in a hospital. Now I am making documentaries and I owe this also to them - because this is how I started - but also in the sense of making things happen and doing something for society. This is what [Organisations A] gave me.”¹⁶⁸

4. Sustained a commitment to the same groups of participants, in the same geographical areas over an extended period:

¹⁶⁶ Interview, 2009, Respondent 23

¹⁶⁷ Interview, 2009, Respondent 23

¹⁶⁸ Interview, 2009, Respondent 6

RPP have identified the need for the engagement of participants to be long-term in order for peace building activities to be effective; explaining that efforts should involve continuous engagement over time; rather than being one-off and un-sustained in the face of difficulties (2009).

Similarly, both Organisation A and B worked with local people in this way. Veprim, explains here how it was essentially his *sustained* engagement with Organisation A (along with other organisations later), which prevented him from returning to becoming ‘closed-minded’ like many of his peers:

“Well, if I say I have been continuously intensifying or being in contact or being engaged – probably that was it. I was within this platform, this environment all the time – so there was no break. For example, if I would be without a job, without work, or disappointed, probably I would have gone back [to my old way of thinking].”¹⁶⁹

This local facilitator from Organisation B explains here how the sustained efforts of this organisation has impacted on the participants of the project,

“Even when I meet those kids today – I call them kids but they are in university now – I meet them and the way they behave with other people it is very different. Put them in the middle of a group and they shine.”

5. Were reflective and consultative

Organisation B had an explicit policy to be reflective in their work, and the ethos of the organisation was forged on ‘action, reflection, consultation’, as the director explains,

“Reflection is very important: planning an action so that it is sustainable, and that you keep reflecting on it and you have that exchange of not just thinking thinking thinking/doing doing doing - that you have that thinking divorced from doing: but that you have integration.”¹⁷⁰

Likewise, Organisation A, after all these years of working, is attempting to develop a conceptual framework for what they were doing and achieving in communities, which up until that point had been wholly spontaneous:

[We] have aimed to make our experience “more scientific” – to see how we can achieve the highest results more consistently, which really means how we can make the best possible volunteer program, for both our local and our international volunteers, a program where volunteers have expectations that are both high and

¹⁶⁹ Interview, 2010, Respondent 12

¹⁷⁰ Interview, 2009, Respondent 31

realistic, and where they get both the tools and the motivation to achieve something higher than anticipated – and realistic. The goal remains. We still have a lot to learn¹⁷¹.

This approach reflects the findings of Lederach, Neufeld & Culbertson (2007: 7) who explain that peace building practice is enhanced by regular reflection and learning: Lederach, Neufeld & Culbertson provide a model for reflection and learning whereby peacebuilding activities and actions are at the center, akin to the eye of a storm. They see the eye as never staying in one place, but shifting over time as the pressures, within and outside, move. As these authors explain, ‘conflict environments are notoriously dynamic, affecting our actions, what is possible and what is needed’; thus what is needed are three closely related stages of a cycle: ‘plan-watch-learn’:

In planning, we decide what to do, how to do it, and why, based on our analysis of the context. We then closely watch our actions and the evolving context. In the learning phase, we reflect on what is happening, sift and integrate lessons and adapt our actions. In this model, planning affects action, which directly affects future planning and action (Lederach, Neufeld & Culbertson 2007: 7).

6. Had a strong ethic of care

Both organisations had strong care ethics. As we have seen in the previous chapter, distance and impartiality have been interpreted as a lack of care amongst actors in Kosovo at the grassroots. However, the strong values of Organisation B were explicitly forged around ideas of unity; the notion of serving a common humanity, thus what was encouraged was a sense of service that transcended boundaries between Kosovo’s communities and between insiders and outsiders alike. In Organisation A, volunteers became deeply involved with the local communities, thus distancing themselves from the lives of local people and their struggles was rarely an option. Many international volunteers also remained in touch with their counterparts in Kosovo once they left, which has had an important impact, in that it has represented a continuous commitment. Kruhonja also emphasises the importance of this from the Croatian context,

Many people who have been working with us keep in touch. It is essential to keep this human contact. It prevents us from feeling hurt, from thinking that the warmth and trust we felt was not real, from losing faith in humanity (Ingelstam 2001: 24).

7. Were ‘resource-sensitive’

¹⁷¹ Taken from an evaluative report of the organisation.

Both organisations were ‘resource-sensitive’ in that they did not spend large sums on personnel, vehicles, and expensive resources. Thus they avoided some of the bitter feelings associated with the wealth of international organisations and personnel, examined in Chapter 6. In Organisation A, the volunteers had limited resources and communities on the whole understood this. Money was not ‘thrown’ at problems, as the ethos behind this organisation was that local people should be assisted in finding ways to address the needs in their communities through sustainable resources.

Theory of change: change ripples out

The importance of devising theories of change as practitioners is highlighted within literature on conflict transformation. Through theories of change we place our reflections on how we observe change happening in the field into a working model (see Lederach, Neufeld & Culbertson 2007). Chigas & Woodrow describe a theory of change as ‘the conceptual link between peacebuilders’ understanding of the conflict, their activities and Peace Writ Large’ (2009: 51).

In this section I present a theory of change based upon how I have observed change happening at the grassroots in Kosovo. I illustrate the sort of individual transformation that has taken place at the grassroots through engagement in the two organisations used as case studies above, and illustrate how change on an individual level is affecting change at the level of: relationships; at the structural level; and at the cultural level, drawing from Lederach, Neufeld & Culbertson’s model: ‘Strategy Starting from Personal Change’ (2007: 36). Presented in Table 10 is an example of the sorts of shifts that have taken place amongst individuals, which add up to ‘individual transformation’ on a small scale. There is nothing radical about this change, nor does it necessitate adopting new moral standpoints. Rather it represents a new willingness to question, and to accept others, and suggests a level of personal empowerment.

Individual Transformation	Table 10
<p>Begins to see the world around her more critically.</p> <p>Questions what influential people in her life have told her.</p> <p>Develops a hunger to learn: new skills, more about the world and different cultures.</p> <p>Is less afraid of difference, more accepting of others.</p> <p>Begins to see the possibility of affecting small changes in her community or family by being a positive influence: be that on younger brothers and sisters, or through community activities with local youth, for example.</p> <p>Own children are presented with a different outlook to the one her parents gave her.</p>	

What I have observed in Kosovo is that through this sort of transformation, relationships are affected. The individual, through a combination of contact with members of other communities and sustained involvement in activities that enhance critical thinking and expose them to new ideas - or even *without* contact with members of other communities - develops a new *willingness* to accept others. In many ways what is being described here is an approach to peace building, which rather than seeking to build relationships, aims to foster cultures of peace. This approach sees peace in relation to the development of individuals, and of the society of which they are a part.

The individual change affects change on the structural level, as individuals become inspired and eager to make small changes in their own communities, even if this is just at the level of the family. For example, an individual from a Roma family may encourage their siblings to attend school and provide them with the support that is not forthcoming from the rest of the family. If the individual comes from a Serbian community, when they hear their friends making prejudiced remarks about Albanians, they may question them as to whether they really know what they are talking about. This represents the cultural level.

Together with others who think like her, the individual becomes active in running a small peace organisation, working across communities in Kosovo. Together they initiate projects jointly with members of minority and majority communities, which have the potential to bring together the interests of those at the middle level such as municipal representatives who support these endeavours through, for example, funding or partnerships; representing

change at the cultural level. How this change ripples out from the individual is illustrated through the following diagram, figure 7, below.

Figure 7: Change Ripples Out



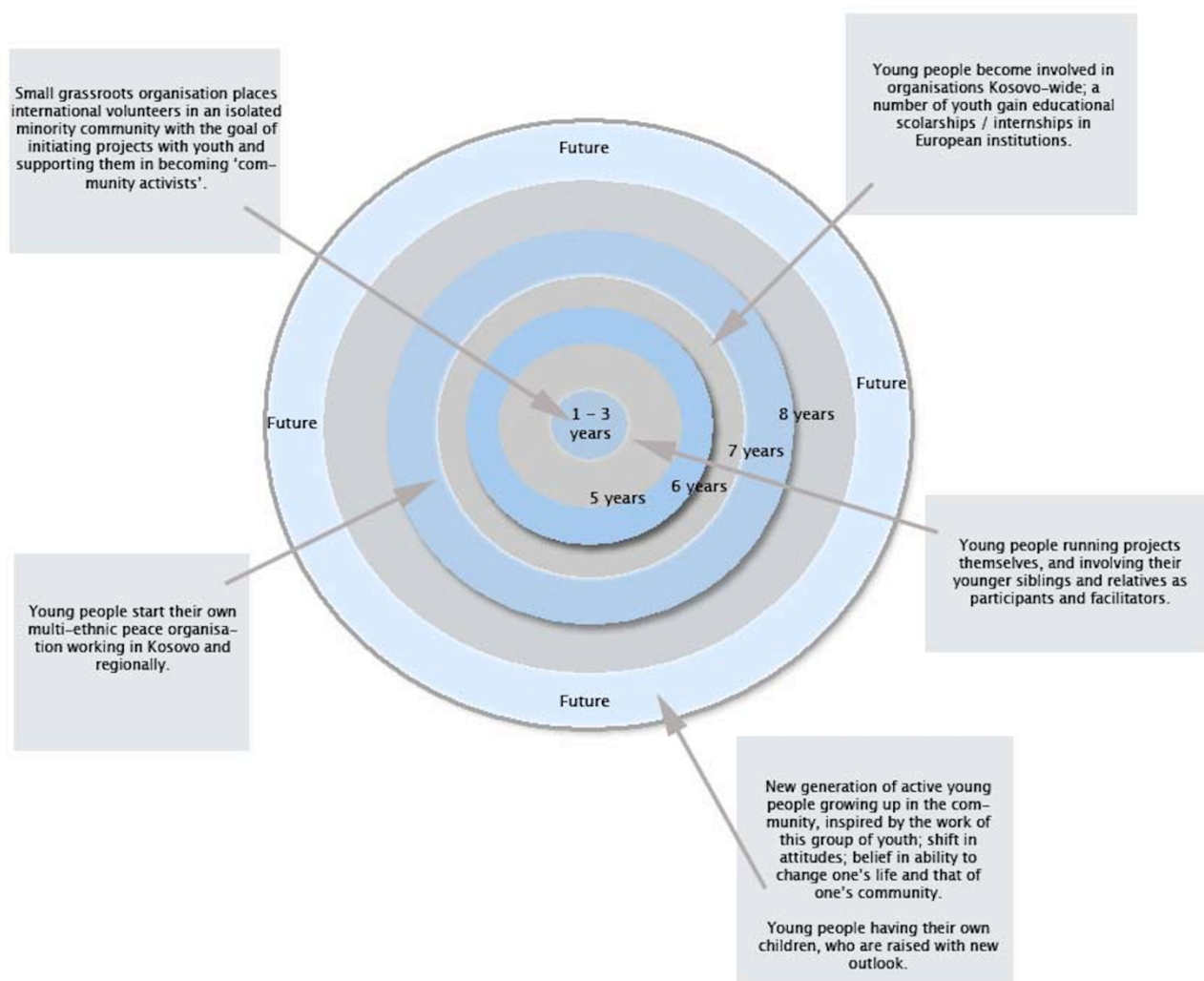
The example given in Table 10, and in figure 7 above reflects what is taking place in Kosovo on the small scale. For example, in 2010 individuals who had been involved in Organisations A and B over a sustained period, came together and began a peace organisation. The mission statement of this organisation states explicitly that its agenda is forged on peace, solidarity and understanding:

GAIA is a peace organization working in a field of peace promotion, understanding and solidarity between people, social justice, sustainable development and respect of environment. GAIA is also promoting cultural diversity and work on education and integration of marginalized and minority group in society. (...) [We] believe that all

people are capable of living together with mutual respect and without recourse to any form of violence to solve conflicts (GAIA Website 2011).

I have mapped this process, in the following diagram: 'circles of change' (figure 8) below, which I liken to a tree stump, upon which the rings represent how the tree has grown over the years. As we can see, what began as international volunteers initiating small arts, media and education projects for local youth in one rural marginalized community in particular (drawing from the example of Organisation A), has grown into young people initiating their own peace organisation, as well as taking up other prestigious opportunities.

Figure 8: Circles of Change



Addressing 'elitism' and the 'easy to reach' in grassroots peace building

One final concern that must be addressed here is that of elitism in peace building and the criticism that activities in Kosovo have targeted only those who are 'easy to reach'.

Analysis from Kosovo suggests that failure to work in more radical mono-ethnic areas such as Drenicë/Drenica, and choosing to engage mostly children, youth and women in activities, seriously undermined the impact that peace building could have to prevent violence at this level (CDA 2009). At the same time, in Kosovo, fostering a genuine willingness amongst individuals to strive for positive social change often feels like an up-hill struggle. Crucially, it takes a lot of time, and commitment. As we saw in the case above, this can pay off, and Organisation A did work in mono-ethnic communities, including in enclaves, with some positive results. At the same time, in many ways, working with the 'easy to reach' makes sense because, when there are so many challenges inherent in affecting change at this level, then there is a need to begin with those who are the most willing. This research suggests that working with youth offers the opportunity to affect a deep, but slow, change at the grassroots, which begins with individuals. Crucially, there rests an urgent need to view peace building at the grassroots as a *generational process of transformation*, rather than one that can serve to *prevent* violence in the short-term. Grassroots peace building of the kind I am advocating here is not geared up to preventing violence in the short-term (i.e. a few months or years following the war), because a process of transforming attitudes and behaviour takes time to take root.

Critics argue that the presence of a vast number of international NGOs in Kosovo has fostered a new elite – described as the “NGO boys and girls” by one respondent. This represents ‘the empowerment of a young, urban, highly educated English speaking elite’ described by Stubbs (2007: 221), detached from grassroots activism. Some of those whose experiences I include in this chapter may fall into this category (although many of them come from underprivileged backgrounds, thus I am reluctant to label them as such).

On the one hand, this saturation of the grassroots through the involvement of international organisation and donors has had many negative effects, including undermining volunteerism, and essentially killing off much that was spontaneous and self-originated about civil society, as well as changing the way that organisations operate (Bagic 2004). On the other hand it has led to the cultivation of a highly motivated critical mass of young people in Kosovo, which cannot be viewed entirely negatively. There rests a very high

possibility that some of those described in this chapter will go on to play roles at the broader social and political levels later, and that they will bring a higher level of self-awareness and critical thinking to their roles than their predecessors, for the reasons described above.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how the capacity of a small group of people has been increased, and describe this as a process of individual transformation and personal empowerment. I have emphasized that this is an informal process, which has occurred as a result of young people being exposed to new opportunities. Through the examples of the approaches of two organisations in particular I emphasize that a shift in attitudes and behaviour need not take place as a result of tackling conflict issues head-on, but rather that through people having their hearts and minds opened up to new possibilities, and being encouraged to engage as volunteers to serve their own communities, individuals become increasingly willing to work towards creating a different kind of society. This is illustrated in particular by the group of local young people choosing to form an NGO with an explicit peace agenda, despite having not been engaged in working with organisations with strong multi-ethnic agendas themselves.

Key Findings & Conclusion

The loss of "physical contact," of "world alienation" as Hannah Arendt has called it, creates an abstract view or image of the world. It's a view international politicians hold in common with academic international relations experts (...) the world consists of a gigantic map composed of *vacua*, power aggregates, spheres of influence, areas of conflicts, zones of interest, and so forth. That this world also consists of people, cultures, histories, religions, and so on, matters very little...

(Ekkehart Krippendorff 1997)

Introduction

This research came about through my longing to understand how those of us from outside can impact the lives of individuals affected by the conflict and war in Kosovo, in an effort to work towards the elusive goal of peace. As I explained in the introduction, it is a journey that began when I spent time with a group of children in Western Kosovo not long after the war, and saw how deeply the conflict had affected the way in which they saw the world around them, and viewed others.

I commenced this research with some naive assumptions about peace and peace building. I mistook peace as a destination that could be arrived at, and building peace as an occupation: something that could be *achieved* or *done*: As if we were building a cathedral, the final image of which had been pre-designed by an architect. Yet, as I realised, because we do not really know or agree on what the peace we are seeking to build should look like; unlike boat builders or the builders of houses who work to designs; peace builders, metaphorically, are working in the dark.

This research has argued that peace in Kosovo - beyond concerning the cessation of physical violence - is subjective and complex. Following the war it was a positive sentiment for many in that it represented hope, and a million different images of a better future, yet for others later it became a begrudged symbol of stability and unceasing international control. Peace at the grassroots was 'held hostage' by politicians and international powerbrokers, who interrupted what might otherwise have been a more positive and organic process, devoid of political 'contamination'.

Peace building at the grassroots has been narrowly interpreted - particularly amongst external actors - as ‘bringing the two sides together’ to create a ‘multi-ethnic society’; which reflects a broader and unhelpful misconception: that the thorn in Kosovo’s side is solely ‘inter-ethnic relations turned sour.’ This research argues that building peace at the grassroots in Kosovo means so much more than this. Peace building means providing opportunities for young people to be ‘opened up to difference’ in all its guises and given opportunities to explore the world around them beyond the narrow frame of being a ‘post-war’ country. It is creating opportunities to foster critical thinking skills and self-awareness, so that young people question what they have been told: by their families, communities, and leaders, and feel empowered to take on roles as potential change-makers themselves. As one respondents suggested,

‘Peace building means encountering that which is not customary, and knowing how to do it in a way that shows respect and dignity to others and yourself.’¹⁷²

I tentatively propose here that inter-ethnic relations will take care of themselves if sufficient attention is paid to addressing how individuals view themselves and the world around them in more general terms; however this is a long-term process, and requires dedication and commitment by those who take it on. It is “a ten year approach, not a one year agenda” as another respondent described it¹⁷³. This research shows that peace does not come about first and foremost through addressing inter-ethnic relations head-on, and whilst this is consistently recognised amongst grassroots actors in Kosovo, it has not been grasped by the wider peace research community, who continue to evaluate peace building in Kosovo in terms of short-term assessments based on inter-ethnic relations.

Positive transformation amongst individuals at the grassroots hasn’t necessarily stemmed from the formal activities of the local and international NGOs that flooded Kosovo in the way we might expect: be that through trainings in Human Rights; campaigns; seminars in Brezovica, etc. Rather transformation has taken place through a more organic - and difficult to map - process of *mixing* at the grassroots, through which actors from around the world, particularly volunteers, created many opportunities for local people to access new opportunities and to have their minds ‘opened up’. In some ways the *content* of international programmes has been far less important than the opportunities they have presented for international friendships, exchanges of ideas, inspiration, and the generation of enthusiasm.

¹⁷² Interview, 2008, Respondent 8

¹⁷³ Interview, 2009, Respondent 2

The late Adam Curle, when asked how success might be measured in peace building, stated simply,

I think if success is anything, it is that loving friendships have developed. That's really the best thing one can hope for. And sharing: to share problems and the difficulties of those you work with and try to find ways out of them' (2002: 308).

Kosovo has also gained and lost much through how each one of us who spent time there has been within ourselves, as individuals. How much we cared; how much we allowed ourselves to become involved in the fabric of local communities; how sensitive we were to people's needs; how deeply we committed to Kosovo; how mature and able we were to engage in self-reflection; are all important factors. Whilst much peace building research is 'technical': forged on assessing the quality of our *action*, through this study I have attempted to show that our ability to make a difference in Kosovo as outsiders has depended also upon the quality of our being.

Key findings

Interpretations of Peace and Peace building at the Grassroots in Kosovo

Though it made sense to speak of 'peace' in Kosovo following the war, the term became empty and meaningless for many as time moved forward, though this was not the case in Northern Kosovo, where peace, even now, retains its urgency and is tied to the pursuit of immediate physical security and even reconciliation in the divided city of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë. In central Kosovo, what people have been seeking as the years passed, rather than peace, is some sort of *development*, or *normalisation*, whilst the term peace has increasingly attracted negative connotations. What we have in Kosovo is 'a passive interpretation of peace' according to respondents, which concerns maintaining the status quo and maintaining stability, instead of a dynamic process of transformation.

Peace and peace building at the grassroots in Kosovo was contaminated by political agendas, and in particular by the limbo created through failure to address Kosovo's final status. Peace building at the grassroots was co-opted by those with agendas set at the political level, because the grassroots became viewed as a way of supporting the implementation of top-level policies, for example through the returns process, and in pursuing stability through multi-ethnicity. This thoroughly undermined the power actors at this level could have to deepen ties forged on genuine commitments to peace, and on any

mutual desire that existed to deepen coexistence. In essence, peace building at the grassroots became politicised over time and part of the much bigger 'chess game'.

Peace building in Kosovo also represents a process of individual healing, and the swift shift that took place whereby peace building became concerned almost solely with relationships and reconciliation was hurtful and unsupportive for those who had suffered the most. Much greater attention should have been paid to finding way to alleviate suffering amongst individuals, and to honour their pain. Activities such as supporting the families of missing persons or documenting war crimes were seen as too 'hot' too handle by external actors who focused instead on youth projects and on cultivating multi-ethnicity. However, this has marginalised these actors from the peace building agenda.

Lederach, Neufeld & Culbertson have suggested that 'good peacebuilding practices are very similar to good sustainable development strategies' and that it 'is not easy to distinguish development practice from peacebuilding' (2007: 2). However, as seen here, there have been calls from within the peace building community to more clearly distinguish between peace building and development, and to centre peace building on addressing the *drivers of the conflict*.

In the case of Kosovo the drivers of the conflict - as identified by international donors and other actors who influenced most peace building at the grassroots - were interpreted two-dimensionally as 'inter-ethnic relations'. Thus peace building centred almost exclusively on efforts to improve relationships between ethnic groups, head-on, which manifested as a great many contact (or people-to-people) projects and programmes at the grassroots; reflecting the wider goal in Kosovo to restore/create a multi-ethnic society. This was a mistake, and whilst we should seek to identify the drivers of the conflict, in the case of Kosovo the drivers are rooted much more deeply in the social fabric than we might at first imagine. For example, this research reveals that, in Kosovo, a lack of critical thinking caused by a limited education system is identified as a major conflict driver amongst those working most intensively at the grassroots. However understanding the deeper dynamics and drivers of conflict demands a more profound analysis of the local context than most outside actors operating in Kosovo have been able to offer.

Peace building in Kosovo has been plagued by short-termism. International actors engaged in peace building - directly, or through local partners - usually took as their starting point the

end of the war, and plotted their exit point some months or years later (whilst a small percentage have sustained their engagement). This reflects an obliteration of the original understanding of what the term peace building means: as it once represented a long-term transformative process (i.e. according to Galtung, forged on the values of Gandhi), before being co-opted by Boutros-Ghali's 'Agenda for Peace'; becoming little more than straightforward violence prevention.

Building Peace through relationships and contact

That peace building has so narrowly centred on bringing 'the two sides together' for activities through a people-to-people approach to peace building reflects an insufficient understanding of the conflict, along with a sustained failure to understand Kosovo's history and society, as well a 'short-termist' approach to peace building amongst external actors. It is not simply that relationships have 'gone bad' in Kosovo as a result of the war, and that therefore they must be restored, it is that communities in Kosovo have lived largely divided for the past twenty to thirty years, with differing levels of interaction and coexistence throughout history. The reasons for these divisions is partly down to the conflict, which intensified from the 1980s onwards, and partly reflects the natural flow of coexistence in the region, where in many parts of Kosovo there has been little reason or desire amongst members of ethnic groups to interact for decades; illustrated through the near inexistent levels of inter-ethnic marriage in Kosovo's history, for example.

By the end of the war in 1999, close to fifty per cent of the population of Serbs and Albanians - the young people in the province - had little-to-no history of interaction with one another having been born at a time when interethnic relations were already strained by the wider political atmosphere, and barely knew how to speak each other's languages. Creating an atmosphere following the war whereby interaction between these groups would naturally occur and deepen was challenging to the point of near impossibility, and was marred further by the deep wounds that had been inflicted upon individuals by the war and the intensifying conflict during the years leading up to it. Alongside this has been the wider resistance young people have faced within their families and communities in forging such ties, and the pressure exerted on communities from actors at the political level, which have not been conducive to strengthening interethnic relations in Kosovo. This is not to say ties have not been forged, or that prejudices have not been reduced as a result of the vast international efforts in Kosovo. However, addressing peace building at the grassroots *solely*

from the perspective of forging interethnic relations was always going to be a very limited and narrow approach.

My findings from Kosovo concur with research from other contexts, which reveal the limitations inherent in using contact as a means of fostering sustainable relationships between members of divided communities. Although this thesis is not an exhaustive study of the use of contact hypothesis in Kosovo, sufficient evidence is presented here to prove that though in Kosovo contact has had a positive impact on allowing young people (the main targets of such initiatives) to adjust distorted images of the other; contact alone is not enough and never will be. Because contact initiatives were on the whole short-term, and because members of communities are not presented with many opportunities to interact in daily life thus allowing contact to translate from the artifices of ‘workshops’, ‘projects’ and ‘training’, into the arena of ‘everyday life’; the effects of short term contact rarely ran deep. Issues of language differences, and what was expressed by respondents as the added ‘effort’ involved in trying to forge relationships across ethnic divides, have also not helped this process.

Whilst this research shows that some interethnic relations have been forged in the process of projects where common interests have been addressed, respondents could not emphasise strongly enough how important it is not to bring people together *solely for the sake of having contact with each another*. Whilst this approach may have been helpful in a small number of projects that took a ‘talking-it-through’ approach: i.e. conflict resolution workshops or dialogue sessions facilitated by experts who addressed painful issues associated with the conflict; this is only one approach. Such activities can only reach small sections of the population (those immediately willing to engage in such a process), and are not a long term or sustainable approach to addressing the conflict.

For a wider approach to affecting attitudes, which stand at the heart of the conflict, what is needed is to engage people in as many positive initiatives as possible which allow for a much more general shift of thinking to take place. The goal is that over time individuals may *choose* to work towards creating a different sort of society: one that is inclusive of difference and not enslaved to narrow thinking and attitudes. Crucially one where people feel empowered to bring about changes in their communities themselves. However, there is no need to *begin* this process through inter-ethnic contact.

Addressing the deeper obstacles to coexistence and reconciliation in Kosovo

In this research we have heard from respondents who carry deep grief as a result of the war: through the loss of family members; from losing their homes; and through facing fear and violence. The insistence on reconciliation in Kosovo, which came mostly from the top levels, but which rippled down into the goals and objectives of projects at the grassroots, has been unhelpful. It has been too much to expect the population to reach out to one another when they face their own challenges stemming from the conflict and war. That peace building has been largely tied to concepts of reconciliation and notions of forging inter-ethnic relationships reflects the gap that exists between the expectations of external actors (idealistic, and focused on their 'raison d'être') and the will of the population. Whilst it is not wrong to carry in our hearts a longing to see our own visions of what peace might look like in Kosovo translated into action, it makes sense to take a step back and look at what is possible, and crucially what people want and need. Reconciliation is anyway a confusing term for many in Kosovo, as it is not a case of two parties of a conflict coming together and reconciling. Many of those who lost loved ones do not know who committed the crimes, thus there is no clear party to reconcile with. Without justice measures it is almost impossible to imagine those who suffered significant loss through the conflict and war striving for reconciliation in any sense of the word.

It has been suggested in Kosovo that without addressing concerns such as justice, missing persons and socio-economic issues which divide communities, peace building efforts will in many ways struggle to overcome the cleavages that stand in the way of deepening coexistence. This has been reflected to an extent in the findings of this research also. At the same time, there are sections of the population (often described as the 'easy to reach' - children, youth and women) who are a little more willing to explore new approaches to viewing the world. These are also sometimes those who have not been as deeply affected by the conflict on a personal level, although this is not always the case. In Kosovo a great number of projects engaged young people, and whilst this approach has been criticised for overlooking more radical sections of society; the result of this massive focus on youth has been positive. As respondents pointed out, you now have a very active mass of young people skilled in many areas, who crucially are motivated, and a little more willing to explore new opportunities and ways of living and viewing others. We cannot wait for the wider issues to be addressed before engaging in peace building at the grassroots. Thus we

should look to what this new and motivated generation, some of whom are included in this study can bring forth. I agree with the observations of the following respondent who stated:

“I think that their finest hour will only come in 10 or 15 years from now.”¹⁷⁴

Us, the peace builders

I have highlighted here the way in which attitudes and behaviours amongst external actors have undermined peace building in Kosovo. In Kosovo there is massive anger at the grassroots amongst local actors in particular, who feel that they have been railroaded by the agendas of the international community. This is particularly true amongst those who were engaged in the pre-war civil resistance movement within the Albanian community, who feel undermined or disregarded by external actors; however respondents expressed this frustration across the board.

Though there exists reams of literature highlighting the need to work collaboratively and inclusively with local actors in order to implement peace building initiatives in a way which enables internal actors take the lead, it appears that this rarely translates into experiences in the field. I have argued in this thesis that it is not necessarily that people *do not know* that they should work in this way, it is more that we become driven by our compulsions and desires: egos; desire for recognition or promotion; career aspirations and money; etc. I argue that it is fundamentally self-awareness (expressed also amongst respondents as ‘maturity’) that is lacking amongst external actors and not knowledge. Therefore, as people seeking to work for peaceful social change, we must first and foremost look towards our own inner transformation.

Grassroots peace building adding up to peace on a larger scale

There exists sustained doubt in the field of peace building as to whether activities at the grassroots add up to peace on a wider scale. This concern has been the focus of recent discussions, surrounding the notion of ‘Peace Writ Large’ in particular. The findings of this research suggest that efforts at the grassroots in Kosovo *are* adding up to peace on a broader scale, all be it in a chaotic and difficult to quantify manner; and I have mapped here this phenomenon through the experiences of a small number of youth (now young adults) who have undergone a degree of personal transformation as individuals through their sustained engagement with (broadly speaking) grassroots peace building initiatives.

¹⁷⁴ Interview, 2008, Respondent 2

This transformation amongst individuals is in turn affecting their relationships within their communities, and represents a new ability to influence those close to them such as younger siblings; and to inspire a new generation of young people to pursue wider opportunities in their lives. Individual transformation has the potential to impact on relationships across communities, and this is illustrated in this research by the group of youth who have come together to form an NGO with an explicit peace agenda, which is working across divides. The power that this transformation amongst individuals has to address change at top and middle levels (referred to also as structural and cultural) will take more time to quantify, however I am certain that a number of individuals included in this research will go on to play important roles at top and middle levels in Kosovo, an opinion shared by others engaged in this research (see above). I argue here that we must retain our faith in the grassroots as affecting the long-term transformation of Kosovo, as they represent 'the next generation'. Crucially we must view peace building as a generation process: that is transformative rather than preventative.

Conclusion

The aim set out at the beginning of this research was to provide insight into the way that international interventions can support peace building at the grassroots: through reflecting on the Kosovo experience. This research was guided by three main research questions, which in essence were: to identify key factors fundamental to bringing about lasting change at the grassroots; to understand how the approaches to grassroots peace building preferred locally have conformed with the approaches external actors have favoured; and to understand in which ways outsiders have most helped and most hindered peace efforts at the grassroots in Kosovo.

These three questions were to be answered through analysing the experiences of those actors who have been most engaged in peace building efforts at the grassroots. Additionally, at the outset I highlighted two key themes/assumptions that were to underpin this research. These are that: societal transformation depends to a significant degree upon the transformation of individuals; and that a substantial gap exists between the ideals and values of external actors, and the will of the population in Kosovo. I chose to undertake this research project through a wholly qualitative method, as I identified there to be a need to examine the *experiences* of those involved in peace building, rather than analysing the impact of peace building efforts.

As illustrated through the summary of my key findings above, I have addressed each of the three research questions proposed. I have analysed in-depth the ways in which internal and external actors have approached peace and peace building and where their approaches have converged or differed. I have shown how external actors have been most supportive to grassroots peace building, and where they have missed the mark, whilst also identifying factors that will bring about lasting change in the region through intervention at the level of the grassroots. My assumption that peace building requires transformation at the level of the individual has been brought to life here. Alongside, the gap that exists between external agendas and the will of the local population has been made explicit.

Applicability and value of this research

This research is first and foremost a reflective and analytical account of the experiences of peace building at the grassroots in Kosovo. It shows the ways in which external actors have been supportive to positive transformation at the grassroots, and the ways in which they have been less so; and provides analysis of interpretations of peace and peace building in Kosovo.

In setting out on this research project I initially intended to create a study that would be applicable and transferable to other conflict settings. Whilst certain of the key findings of this study may well be useful in other places, respondents in Kosovo emphasized that the tendency in peace building to ‘superimpose’ findings from one context to another is unhelpful. One respondent described the need to transfer knowledge between conflict transformation settings as “a fine line” - explaining that this should be an on-going and reflective process, and that it cannot be rushed, and shouldn’t be understood in terms of “lessons learned” as this represents the past tense: or a full stop from one context to the next. Learning across context must therefore be on going.

I therefore present these findings as a single case study with applicability to other contexts, but with an understanding that *first and foremost we must take each setting and analyse it individually*. For example, the emphasis placed in this study on the development of critical thinking skills amongst young people and the opportunity that international organisations have offered youth to open up their minds to difference, may or may not be relevant to settings beyond Kosovo; as this issue relates also to Kosovo’s particular social landscape - and to a ‘cocktail’ of factors that have contributed to the proliferation of prejudices and intolerance in Kosovo’s society as a whole.

The behaviour of external actors in Kosovo is of relevance to all post-war peace missions, and I have made explicit my commitment that as individuals seeking to ‘do good’ in the world, we should first and foremost address our own process of inner transformation. Arguably this point needs to be emphasized more than ever at this time, as we are witnessing a proliferation of literature forged on an interpretation of peace building which is estranged its transformative roots. Analysis of peace building appears to be moving towards being solely the study of technical procedures aimed at enhancing ‘impact’, or entirely theoretical debates on the legitimacy or otherwise of western interventions. I lament the fact that no new generation of researchers has emerged who are excited and willing to tackle peace building from the perspective of individuals, forged for example upon notions of peace rooted in the transformative ideas of Gandhi, and the recognition amongst Adam Curle and others of the relevance of Buddhist thought to peace building alongside other philosophies from an eastern tradition.

Additionally, the wider relevance of this research also centres on the methodology. Through focusing on *experiences* over *impact*, I have brought to the fore the complexity of peace building at the grassroots in relation to how actors *feel* about engaging with the issues which peace building engenders, and particularly in relation to how they have experienced the conflict and war. There continues to be a need to pursue peace building research through what might broadly be termed as ‘storytelling’, and to take risks in forging new theories based upon interpretations of the *personal experiences* of individuals, and not only on impact.

Opportunities for Further Research

This research reveals a number of avenues for further research in this area.

Firstly, this is essentially an Albanian-centric study of peace building in Kosovo, and there remains a tremendous need to understand better how peace building at the grassroots has been experienced amongst Serbian and other communities in Kosovo. This represents a sorely under-researched area.

Secondly, this research raises important questions about why peace building activities revolving around contact continue to be favoured, when research from Northern Ireland in particular - alongside emerging research from other contexts (see Paffenholz 2010), and this

research from Kosovo - reveal the limitations of this approach. There appears to be confusion concerning the ability of contact to address prejudices amongst groups of people in a non-conflict setting on the one hand, and the vastly different atmosphere presented in a context like Kosovo, on the other. A much broader debate of the limitations of a contact approach in conflict settings would lead to a re-evaluation of people-to-people approaches to peace building.

Thirdly, my analysis here emphasizes that transformation of individuals took place through a process of 'opening-up' in Kosovo and through a broadening of horizons. It would be exciting and beneficial to undertake a full-length study of how informal mixing between external and internal actors can affect such a change. Described by some respondents as a 'side-effect' of international peace building missions, there remains great potential to examine whether this phenomenon has taken place in other settings.

Finally, this thesis reveals the value inherent in conducting peace research through the eyes of grassroots actors, and through an approach based on storytelling. This is a lesser-used methodology within peace research, and one that represents opportunities for future new learning.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: profile of respondents

The following table provides a profile of each of the respondents, alongside details of how many times each respondent was quoted in the study. It should be emphasized that respondents not directly quoted still played key roles in informing this research.

Profile of Respondents					Table 1	
Respondent No.:	Background	M/F	Age	Profile	Region	No. of times Quoted
1	Local	F	> 35	Director of local peace building NGO, highly active in civil society. Influential figure working for peace in Kosovo	Mitrovica/ Mitrovicë	2
2	International	M	< 35	Director of International NGO focused on education, active in Former Yugoslavia since 1994	Kosovo – wide	6
3	Local	F	> 35	Director of local NGO, active member of pre-war civil resistance movement, highly active in civil society regionally	Kosovo – wide	6
4	International	F	< 35	Head of Mission for an international NGO engaged in youth and sports programmes	Kosovo – wide	1
5	International	M	< 35	Head of mission for an international NGO engaged in Human Rights and law initiatives at the grassroots	Kosovo – wide	-
6	Local	F	< 35	Masters student and film maker with long engagement in grassroots initiatives	Western Kosovo/Pri shtina/Priš tina	13
7	Local	M	< 35	Director of a local NGO focused on youth and capacity building, highly active member of civil society	Mitrovica/ Mitrovicë	2
8	International	F	> 35	Long-term resident in Kosovo who has held key responsibilities in both international and local NGOs, both before and following the war	Kosovo – wide	11
9	Local	M	< 35	Head of a Kosovo-wide youth programme, working also with central government	Kosovo – wide	7

10	International	F	> 35	Long-term resident in Kosovo who has held key responsibilities in both international and local NGOs, before and after the war	Prishtina/Priština	2
11	International	M	> 35	Long-term resident in Kosovo who is Director of an international NGO working solely at the grassroots	Kosovo – wide	6
12	Local	M	< 35	Masters students and UN agency employee, with long engagement with local and international NGOs as both facilitator and participant	Kosovo – wide	13
13	Local	M	< 35	Local activist who played an active role in the civil resistance movement. Active in politics, former member of KLA	Kosovo – wide	1
14	International	M	< 35	International long-term volunteer active in the youth sector and organised several European exchanges involving Kosovo youth	Kosovo – wide	1
15	Local	M	> 35	Central Government employee, formerly oversaw youth and cultural activities in Kosovo	Kosovo – wide	4
16	Local	M	< 35	Local activist and film maker, long-term volunteer for grassroots organisation in Kosovo	Central Kosovo/Priština/Priština	–
17	Local	M	< 35	Head of a local NGO engaged in political lobbying. Participated in many international and local NGO initiatives at the grassroots	Prishtina/Priština South Kosovo	1
18	Local	M	> 35	Director of local veterans organisation	Kosovo – wide	1
19	Local	M	> 35	Former member of KLA, policeman during the 1970s/80s	Podujevë/Podujevo	1
20	Local	M	< 35	Local activist who has worked for and participated in the activities of international and local NGOs	Gjilan/Gnjilane/	–
21	Local	M	< 35	Has held several positions in international NGOs engaged at the grassroots, began working as a local volunteer in a small NGO as a young teenager	Kosovo – wide	–
22	Local	M	> 35	local activist and head of a local NGO. Has been engaged in politics	Kosovo – wide	–

23	Local	M	< 35	Former local facilitator for an international grassroots NGO. Currently employed by EULEX	Kosovo – wide	3
24	Local	M	< 35	local activist and director of a large local cultural organisation	Prishtina/Priština	2
25	Local	M	< 35	Journalist and social commentator		1
26	Local	M	> 35	Director of a local NGO which was very active in the pre-war civil resistance movement	Kosovo – wide	1
27	Local	F	> 35	Local activist, involved in civil resistance movement and local civil society, academic and engaged with transitional justice measures	Kosovo – wide	-
28	International	F	< 35	Long-term international volunteer in Kosovo	Central Kosovo/Priština/Priština	-
29	Local	M	< 35	Local Artist and musician	Prishtina/Priština	1
30	International	M	> 35	Economist, holds a senior position in EULEX	Prishtina/Priština	-
31	International	F	< 35	Long-term resident in Kosovo, former Director of an international NGO engaged at the grassroots. Currently working in higher education institute in Kosovo.	Kosovo – wide	6
32	Local	M	> 35	Local activist campaigning on issues of missing persons	South Kosovo	4
33	Local	F	> 35	Group of women activist campaigning on issues of missing persons	Kosovo – wide	1

Appendix 2: respondents sample

Age, Background, Gender Across Respondents					Table 2
Age	No. of Respondents	Background		Gender	
		International	Local	Female	Male
< 35	19 (58%)	6 (31.6%)	13 (68.4%)	4 (20.1%)	15 (79.9%)
> 35	14 (42%)	4 (28.5%)	10 (71.5%)	6 (42.9%)	8 (57.1%)
Total 33					

